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NOTES ON BAPTISM:

IN WHICH ITS

Spirituality as a Covenant,

MADE OR KEPT,

IS CLEARLY SET FORTH, AND UNIFORMLY ADHERED TO.

BY

REV. R. GREGG.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.:

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ERRATA.

On page 80, seventeenth line, read "regenerated" for "regenerated."

On page 147, ninth line, read "illustrate" for "illstrate."

On page 141, sixth line, read "Irenaeus" for "Irenarus."

On page 25, thirteenth line, quotation ends with the word "stream."

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PREFACE.

Years ago, with no thought of writing a book, I determined to possess every idea the Bible could furnish me on the subject of baptism. In preparing for study, I cut from an old copy of the New Testament every leading verse or paragraph on this theme, and so arranged them that I could readily glance my eye from verse to verse, as I studied and compared them. Long and earnest was the search, seldom thinking, and little caring, what the *uninspired* had written on the subject. Ere long I was charmed with a deep, underlying *spirituality*, which pervaded every verse and constituted a harmonious system of thought.

The style and title of the book was suggested by the mode of study. It is a commentary on the verses of the New Testament relating to this theme. The *title* also harmonizes with the purpose to make the treatise suggestive, rather than

exhaustive; an appendix, or supplement, to other writings, rather than a full presentation of the subject.

I ask the critics to deal kindly with its *verbal* defects, and give their best skill and strength to a searching examination of the *leading, bolder thoughts*.

I hope the work is new enough to merit attention, and not revolutionary enough to merit anathemas. May its influence tend to narrow the gulf that has separated the disputants upon this theme.

R. G.

MECHANICSBURG, ILL., July 31, 1880.

INTRODUCTION.

What is the spirituality of water baptism? This is our central inquiry. We would know the exact spiritual transaction underlying the visible, in such baptism as pleases the Author of our Bible. It is strange that this question should have received comparatively so little attention. As to the *mode* and *subjects* of baptism, the world is already overcrowded with books. The question of the *design* of baptism is not the same as ours, though closely allied to it. The design relates to the object of the ordinance or the condition into which it will take us, the goal towards which we travel. We rather seek to know what we are doing while receiving or administering the rite; what it is that God only beholds, and beholding, sanctions.

Every act of a being with mind and body is characterized by a visible motion and a spiritual meaning. If it be a religious act, the spirituality is all-important. Study well the Savior's estimation of the poor widow's gift.

The words which express religious actions, reveal to us their full divine meaning, when we

associate with their use this deep spirituality. It is childish to think of prayer as the pronouncing of certain words, or the posture of the body. Prayer refers to the *reverence*, the *desire*, the *faith* of the soul. The communion service is destitute of real meaning, if it suggests only the partaking of the emblems. The bread and wine are but the heaven-ordained accompaniments to a sublime spirituality, which should go on between the soul and its God. With them we should commune. So of baptism. With water we baptise. With the ceremony that to human eye is visible, there must be associated a spirituality, in order to constitute it a true baptism. In a certain pond on the same day there were two transactions, which were alike externally, but spiritually they were very different. In both cases there was the immersion of a human form, as the Bible formula for baptism was repeated. In one case, the parties were an ordained minister and a true believer. In the other it was two rude young men, making fun. I venture to define these ceremonies as *baptism by immersion*, and, perhaps, *blasphemy by immersion*. The words "baptism" and "blasphemy" refer entirely to the spirituality of the transactions. The last word may be too severe. It may have been mere rudeness by immersion. But there was a spirituality about it, in which there was not a single element of true baptism. We trust the other

transaction was totally different in its spirituality—so different that the word “baptism” accurately described it.

We long to know exactly what this spiritual something is. Never shall we understand the full beauty and glory of the ordinance until we do.

We have sincerely and earnestly tried to find out the “mind of God” upon this subject, as far as possible ignoring all other questions, and forgetting all human opinions.

The Bible must be harmonious in all its utterances, and hence we must reject every theory that clashes against a single fact or verse.

Three distinct characters were either advised to be baptized, or did receive baptism. Awakened sinners, crying “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” were told to “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins.” (Acts, 2:38).

Again, baptism was administered to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, after their conversion. (See Acts 10:44-48). We quote in part: “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized,” etc.

Again, the eternally sinless received water baptism. We should regret to hold a view that would compel us to claim for Christ a baptism essentially unlike all others.

One writer has said: **"The import of christian baptism is totally inapplicable to the person and character of Christ; for baptism is both a sign and a seal. As a sign, it witnesseth to our inward washing and regeneration by the Holy Ghost."*

If my theory clashed against such a great fact, I should certainly try to modify my theory, not that fact.

Again, a true view of the spirituality of the ceremony will do away with the necessity of assuming that our Savior so often used the word with only a figurative, allegorical or metaphorical meaning.

According to most writers, Christ never used the word, so far as the record shows (except in allusion to John), in its literal real meaning, from the hour of his own baptism until his final commission to his disciples to "go preach" * * "baptizing." This modifying the meaning of the words of the great Teacher is a most startling fact. We prefer to let his "words that are spirit" be our first, best guide to the deeper spiritual ideas he was always adding to the former meaning of language.

With the New Testament as our only guide, and the words of Jesus our best key, we confidently affirm that the spiritual work of the ordinance is *making a covenant*.

*Hibbard, part 2, page 34.

The party seeking baptism pledges duty to God; thereon the party administering it promises blessings from God, and this is covenanting. This covenant must be made with water. God has so ordained it. And water is a beautiful emblem of all the blessings of the covenant. This is not a new thought. Nearly every writer incidentally recognizes it. It is in harmony with the better views and practice of the church in all the past ages. Yet, we are writing under the deep conviction that far greater stress should be placed upon this thought; that this idea, forced upon us by some of the verses and facts of the Bible, will give new beauty and harmony to all others, throwing a perfect flood of light on some of the verses hitherto dimly understood.*

The more we meditate upon this idea, the more will the word "baptize," or any possible translation thereof, suggest to us, not so much the bringing into contact the water and the person, as the spiritual bonds then and thus ratified between a soul and its God.

This view harmonizes perfectly with the three cases already cited. Sinners may well "repent and be baptized (covenanted) for the remission of sins," and the Gentiles, recently purified by faith, may also be baptized, (covenanted,) and a *covenant* "to fulfill all righteousness" "it be-

*See Notes on 1 Pet. 3, 18-21, and 1 Cor. 15-29.

cometh " the eternally pure to take upon himself.*

This spiritual idea gives a clue to the future condition of all the baptized. They are the *covenanted*—the *pledged*—the *bound*. If true to their baptism and their conscience, they will ever feel the force of that covenant, and strive to keep it till death. Thus the covenant-making of the ceremony will lead to the covenant-keeping for the rest of life. This, too, will be our part of a perpetual, ever-present baptism; and then God will give to us the saving baptism of the Holy Ghost, thus keeping his part of an ever-present baptism.

It is a noticeable fact that, wherever blessings are predicated upon baptism, the *present* tense is used: "He that believeth and *is* baptized;" "by one spirit we *are* baptized into one body;" "baptism *doth* also now save us." The visible, or material, part can be present but a moment, but the spiritual, real baptism may be as abiding as earth-life.

In every allusion of Christ to his own baptism, he uses the present tense: "The baptism I *am* baptized with;" "I *have* a baptism to be baptized with." In this last quotation it is both a *present* and a *future* fact. How plain is this, if we associate with his baptism the spiritual idea of a bond

*On these texts see Notes: Mat. 3: 13-17; Acts 2: 38; 10, 44-48.

or covenant resting on him, moment by moment, till in death he fulfills all its requirements.

The spirituality of water baptism must be recognized in order to give clear meaning to the Bible expression, "*baptism of repentance.*" *Sprinkling* of repentance! *Immersion* of repentance! If it was the immersion of *repentants*, it might be possible; but to immerse an invisible, *spiritual* state of the soul, called repentance, in river, pond or tank, would be a very strange undertaking. But let the word "baptism" suggest the spiritual idea of covenant or bond, and all is plain. The sentence then will mean, the *covenant of repentance*.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is strictly and only a spiritual work. It is the spirit of God working upon the spirit of men. Thus several texts of scripture force us to accept for the word *baptize* a meaning truly and entirely spiritual. Why have not careful thinkers observed a spirituality in baptism with water, rendering it analogous to baptism with the Holy Ghost? In the one, God, by his servant, makes a covenant, promising blessings; in the other, God keeps his covenant, imparting blessings.*

Dr. Whedon, in his comments on the expression, "baptism of repentance," (Acts 19: 4,) plainly asserts the covenantal character of the ordinance, "John's baptism, when received, ob-

*See, more fully, Note on Acts 1: 5.

ligated the people to repent anew of sin, in expectation of a soon-coming Messiah. By accepting the rite, they acknowledged the obligation and expectation." I would modify this merely by the statement, that this "*expectation*" was based upon the prophetic *pledge* that the Messiah was coming to bless, which pledge was the other part of the baptismal covenant which John preached and administered.

In the same place the Doctor marks out a clear difference between John's baptism and that instituted by the Savior. "Yet when Messiah came, he required a new baptism, obligating a consecration to him, whereby the spirit of promise would be poured out upon them, and they be emancipated into the full liberty of the sons of God." Here, the covenantal idea is plainer,—"*obligating*" "whereby the spirit of promise would be poured out," emancipating.

We are very indifferent about the meaning of the word as used in ancient or secular writings. Many a Bible word, whose meaning was once materialistic, has now a strictly spiritual import. Such is the word *spirit* itself. But I am happily surprised to obtain good evidence of the spirituality of this word from a very unexpected source.

Dr. Conant, in his ingenious book, "Baptizein," has made one hundred and sixty-eight quotations from ancient secular Greek writings. The

book is designed to prove that "the word * * had a perfectly defined and unvarying import,"* and appears to have been issued to justify the rendering of the word in their new translation. Yet in scores of places, as quoted in the volume, the word is used to express *not any visible or material transaction whatever*, but strictly and only the conditions or doings of the mind. All such places are classified under the head of "the tropical or figurative sense" of the word; and hence the hasty reader would not so readily see how they all disprove that assumed "true and *only* import."

I quote in brief some examples of the spiritual meaning of the word :

"Misfortunes assailing, baptize us." (Ex. 112).

"Baptized by anger." (Ex. 113).

"Baptizing the soul." (Ex. 114).

"Baptized by grief and moved by tears." (Ex. 117).

"Baptized in sleep." (Ex. 120, and others).

"Baptized the city in sleep." (Ex. 121).

"If David, therefore, being a king, and baptized with ten thousand cares," etc. (Ex. 123).

"Baptized in ignorance." (Ex. 127, and others).

"Baptized with debts amounting to fifty millions." (Ex. 133).

"Baptize the people with taxes." (Ex. 132).

*Baptizein, page 158.

In these last quotations the bond idea prevails, as it does in some other places in the same volume.

Of course Dr. Conant regarded himself competent to know that every quotation from example 87 to 151 (sixty-five in all), had only a "tropical or figurative sense." Yet he finally gives to the word a truly spiritual meaning. He says (page 159:) "*By analogy, it expressed the coming into a new state of life or experience, in which one was, as it were, inclosed and swallowed up, so that, temporarily or permanently, he belonged wholly to it.*" The italics are the doctor's. Of course, he tries to tack on to the definition some idea akin to his immersion; but still it stands forth a grand concession to our claim of the strictly spiritual meaning sometimes attached to this word.

A friendly critic tells me that I shall be accused of trying to fix a new meaning to the word "baptize." I do not so regard my position. But I am resolved, God helping me, to bring out more boldly a sublime spirituality which has been too lightly regarded, although generally, perhaps universally, recognized. Let the foolish battle still rage—if rage it must—about the material movements suggested by the ancient or profane uses of the word. We are determined not to enter this arena of strife, or scarcely stop to look thereon. Let those who think that ques-

tion all-important, settle it *if they can*. But whether they shall succeed or not, ours is the more pleasant and important task of bringing out clearly and fully the spiritual meaning of the word as it stands in our guide-book to spiritual excellence, and as used by the sanctified lips of our *Spiritual Teacher*.

In this work we care for no other text-book or dictionary than the Bible. We gather all our ideas from its statements. We reject all those assumed ideas that clash against its utterances, confidently expecting to show that a true recognition of the spirituality of the word will give perfect harmony and new beauty to every sentence upon this subject, shedding light on several verses hitherto but partially understood.

We are perfectly willing that the eye and heart of the reader shall be so fixed upon this Bible-proven spirituality as to leave far back in the realm of non-essentials the debate about the mode of using water. A novel-writing controversialist puts into the lips of its heroine, "*Theodosia*," this sentiment: "Mother, if what I *saw* to-day was baptism," alluding to the immersion of a schoolmate, "then I was never baptized." Very true; but she saw not that which alone made that transaction truly *a baptism*. If there was baptism there, (and we trust there was), it was as far above what the human eye beheld, as Heaven is above earth. It was as much grander as is

the soul's eternal union to God by covenant grander than the temporary contact of the water with the human body.

As already intimated, we design to say but little about the mode of using the water with which we baptize. We protest against assuming that there is very great importance attached to that which God has not made very plain. We protest against being very certain where the Bible is very *uncertain*. As sure as God would guide me to Heaven, everything important should be as plain as possible. Yet I can in one hour re-write and modify verses in our Bible, so as to make the mode of baptism indisputably plain. Certainly, God could have done this much for us. Why did he not? I defy those to answer this question, who assume that the mode is important.

Indefiniteness of mode may exist, even though the event is of great importance. I have searched the Bible to ascertain the exact mode of ratifying the marriage covenant. I can not find it; but I do find complete information concerning the *obligations*, the *relations*, the duties and privileges of married life. So of baptism. The Bible could hardly be more plain, and yet so brief, concerning the vows, the duties and blessings of the truly baptized.

Baptism has often been spoken of as a *seal*. The propriety of this is seen from the fact that

it sustains a similar relation to our promise to do duty, and God's promise to bestow blessings, that a seal does when affixed to ordinary contracts. It is the finale of the contract, officially recognizing both parties irrevocably bound to each other. The name, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," refers to the divine party to whom the candidate pledges, and from whom all promised blessings shall come. I would no sooner baptize, unless I believed I had authority from the Triune God to promise blessings from him to the faithful, than I would put the seal of my native State on papers not authorized by my State.

Baptism has been called a *sign*. It seems more exact to state that the *water* used is a *sign*. Water has always been an emblem or sign of blessings. It is a sign of purity, of satisfaction, of salvation, of Heaven. Long ago, the sun-illuminated water, spanning the heavens with a bow of beauty, became a token—a *sign* of a *covenant* between God and man.

But while the water with which we baptize is a sign, as really as is the bread and wine with which we commune, the entire transaction reaches far beyond the mere idea of a sign. It is the binding of a soul to God by a most solemn contract or promise; whereupon God pledges to them, if faithful to their vow, all the blessings of the gospel here and hereafter.

MATTHEW.

Mat. 3.—1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

“John the Baptist.” “That is, the baptiser. Many learned men have maintained that the baptism of proselytes existed among the Jews before the coming of John. After a critical review of its existence, (Bib. Rep., Apr., 1853), Prof. Stuart decides that the probability, on the ground of evidence, is strong against it! John, then, was probably called *the Baptist*, as being the first baptizer.”—*Dr. Whedon*.

“Saying Repent ye.” Thus he exhorted them to the duty to which, in their baptism, they would be required to pledge themselves.

“For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” This is the grand idea of the divine side of the baptismal covenant of John. The Anointed shall come to bless you.

Mat. 3.—5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

“Jerusalem and all Judea,” etc. This clearly proves that vast numbers heard and were baptized. Yet we need not claim that, literally, he baptized every one of the inhabitants of that region.

“Baptized, * * confessing.” Confession harmonizes well with true sorrow for sin, and a pledge to sin no more; and the confessing and pledging are excellent preparations for blessings from the coming Messiah.

“In Jordan.” This expression may refer to the low lands of the valley, or to the water of the river ; and there, as they entered into solemn covenant, he may have sprinkled, or poured, or immersed them.

“O generation of vipers.” The severity of language indicates the great sin of those who fail to keep their vows.

The 9th and 10th verses continue the exhortation, winding up with the curse that shall fall upon the unfaithful—“cast into the fire.”

“I baptize * * unto repentance.” How perfectly those expressions harmonize with the spiritual idea of baptism. I would bind you in this ceremony by a vow that you will keep ; then the Mightier than I shall fulfill the divine part of the covenant. He shall bless. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

“Unquenchable fire.” Nearly every writer claims that this verse refers to the doom of the ungodly, as well as to the blessings of the righteous.

Our theology need not be suspected if we suggest another interpretation. The fearful doom of the ungodly has abundant proof elsewhere.

“The wheat” are the righteous ; “the garner” is Heaven ; “the chaff” is something to be completely destroyed. It agrees with the figure to refer it to the sins and imperfections of those

who are to be prepared by the Holy Ghost and fire for the garner of Heaven. Then, the fire of the 11th and the fire of the 12th verses are the same fire. It is Holy Ghost fire—burning the dross, and leaving the pure gold—burning up the chaff, and leaving the wheat thoroughly clean.

Mat. 3.--13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well plesed.

“Then cometh Jesus * * to be baptized. There is here expressed a special desire. He had an object worthy his nature and mission.

“But John forbade him.” There are two reasons readily seen for John’s unwillingness to baptize Jesus: First—He was the one to keep the divine part of the baptismal covenant. He was the one promised to each and every one to whom the rite had been administered. He in person was the Blessing. He in work was the

Blessor—the Baptizer. Hence, John's statement, "I have need be baptized of thee."

Hence another reason for John's refusal—a reason so obvious as to hardly need stating: John, knowing his pure and elevated character, could not consistently administer the baptism or covenant of repentance. But Jesus had no notion of taking such a covenant. So, he proposes one entirely consistent with his pure nature and lofty mission.

"It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." To such a covenant John was willing to baptize him. The above line of this 15th verse is our guide to a correct view of the baptism of Jesus.*

In one word, our view is, that in his baptism he did not "fulfill all righteousness," but *did surely covenant so to do*. The little word "*it*" suggests the thing for which he petitioned John—that thing was the privilege of baptism. If the idea of baptism is covenanting, then the privilege of covenanting was just what he wanted. Thus much to indicate the harmony of our positions, rather than the proof of their correctness. But *we argue* this view from the peculiar structure of the verse, and, hereafter, will continue the argument by every word of Jesus concerning his own personal baptism.

*For a more complete argument, see "Baptism of Jesus." At first writing, I put most of that argument into the Textual Notes, but afterwards gave it a separate place.

If the word "*it*" does not stand for the idea of covenanting, then it is the equivalent of the expression, "to fulfill all righteousness." If the latter, the word "becometh" is far too tame a word. To conform to each and every requirement of Heaven, is as binding as his own divinity. To publicly pledge this work is of less importance—just important enough to be exactly expressed by the word "becometh." Jesus could have correctly said, "I must—absolutely and irrevocably must—fulfill all righteousness, or I shall be false to my Messiahship, and the divine government will be an eternal failure; and now, as I fairly enter on the best and severest work of the eternal ages, it becometh us to covenant to fulfill it all."

When we compare this covenant of Jesus with the covenant John had been administering to sinners, the word "becometh" takes on an added fitness and beauty. Very unbecoming, very inconsistent, would have been the former; grandly, beautifully appropriate the latter.

Again, that comprehensive word "*all*"—"to fulfill *all* righteousness"—agrees best with our explanation. The word "*all*" appropriately refers to everything there is contained in the phrase, "to fulfill all righteousness." Now, baptism, at best, is but one item; and the sentence could have been so worded as to refer to one item

instead of the whole. Thus I must fulfill *each* requirement of Heaven.

It is absolutely impossible for any one act, especially an initiatory act, such as Christ was about to perform, to fulfill all righteousness; yet just such an act can covenant to fulfill all. He did not, in his baptism, fulfill all righteousness; or he might have gone directly up from Jordan to a welcoming Heaven, avoiding the terrible scenes that intervened.

Here, we have hit our strongest argument. Our interpretation leaves the expression, "to fulfill all righteousness," with its most natural and common meaning, alluding directly and only to his future life, and especially his sin-atoning death. The force of this argument will not be felt till one studies carefully that grandest argument (Book of Romans) concerning human rescue through Christ, made consistent with the "righteousness" of God.

Finally, all other theories require their advocates to show some existing law or requirement for the baptism of Jesus. This has never been done satisfactorily. From all other standpoints, we cannot see its consistency, much less its necessity.

"Us." This word has been uniformly referred to John and the Savior. Does it not also refer to the Trinity? It is certain that when Christ had made and John had sealed the covenant,

then the "Spirit descending," and the "voice saying," gave a visible, audible, sublime amen to this central bargain of the moral universe.

"Out of the water." "From the water," has been claimed as the better rendering. The translators of the Bible Union, although immersionists, concede the claim, and so render it. I care nothing for this point, even if I was anxious about the *mode*; for, as Dr. Whedon says, "thousands, in ancient and modern times, have been baptized by affusion, as they are represented, in ancient pictures, standing or kneeling in the bed of a stream. The most ancient picture of the baptism of our Lord, which seems authentic, represents him standing in the water, and John, standing on a rock out of the water, pouring water upon his head. So, he was represented by the Christians, in the Catacombs, in the earlier ages of the Church.

"The Spirit of God descending." It thus indorsed the personage and his conduct; and thus visibly did what he really will do to all who, in spirit, follow the Consecrated One.

"And lo, a voice." God the Father adding his approval, and ratifying the whole that had been done, and all that should yet be done on earth and among men by this strange visitor.

The writer's views, foreshadowed in the above, and more completely proven hereafter, are, that the personal baptism of Jesus was, in its essen-

tial, generic character, exactly like all true baptisms by water. It was his covenant or bond to do his life's work. Its only peculiarity was, that *his* was a peculiar work. He must give his life a ransom for us. Nothing else will "fulfill"—will round up to its beautifully perfect proportions—the manifested righteousness of God. It must needs be that Christ should suffer, that God might be just, and yet in love justify the sinner that comes by faith.

We shall yet see the perfect harmony of this view with every word of Jesus concerning himself, as baptized.

Mat. 16.—19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

We do not claim that this verse, so difficult to be understood, refers with certainty to the baptismal bond; yet there is plausibility to this view, especially when we compare it with the high authority actually possessed by the Savior, and seemingly conferred in the commission to go preach, "baptizing." (See Mat. 28: 18; and Mark 16: 15). We insert it, hoping the true idea of baptism may throw some light upon it.

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth." That man is *bound* who has so taken a true covenant as to feel perpetually its force, and, hour by hour,

keeps all its obligations. "Peter, you know me ; now, *bind* men to me by a covenant. Teach them to hold that covenant and observe all that it contains, and I assure you they 'shall be bound in Heaven.' 'Loose' that bond. Tell them all is well, because they have been well baptized. Sell them an indulgence to sin. Assure them that God holds their souls tied to the throne of bliss, even though they utterly fail to remain sweetly bound to duty here ; and, Peter, you or your successors have told them an eternally ruinous falsehood." Ministers and members had better beware, for whatsoever thou shalt loose from doing duty on earth, shalt be loosed from blessedness in Heaven.

There may be grave objections to this exegesis ; yet, it recognizes the fact that *earth is peculiarly for duty*, and *Heaven for rapture*. It also claims that the binding and loosing here both relate to duty ; and that the binding and loosing in Heaven both relate to the bliss of Heaven. It admits that the minister who binds, or helps to bind, to the practice of duty, is acting nobly ; and that the minister whose words, or influence, or authority, is loosening from duty, is acting a terrible part. It also links the bliss of eternity to the faithful on earth, and separates the wicked therefrom.

If this explanation be true, the first clause is expressive of authority conferred, and the last

clause of a warning given. It could have been introduced with "though," or "although," instead of "and."

It is, then, as if our President should say to a chosen Minister to a foreign court: "Now, sir, you know us here at Washington—the principles and laws we require in this treaty of peace; go and bind them to these laws, and stamp the contract with our seal, and keep them bound, and we will ratify the treaty. Whatsoever thou shalt bind in that European court shall be bound here in the United States; but if, by any after influence, you loosen them, and they disregard their treaty, we are loosened from our part. You have periled the peace of the once treaty-bound nations."

Mat. 20.—20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized

with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

These are the first recorded words of the great Teacher which give us any light on the subject of his baptism or our own. We did not quote the last verse to help us better to understand baptism; but we did hope our view of baptism would help the better to understand it.

In the 17th chapter, Christ alludes to Elias and to John the Baptist, but we did not count it into our notes, as there is nothing therein contained which gives any idea of the nature or bearing of John's baptism, or any other.

This conversation with the children of Zebedee, one more reference to John's baptism, and then the final command to "go preach, * * * baptizing," and we have done with all that Matthew has recorded of the words of the world's Teacher upon this subject. Hence, we claim for this a prominent place and a careful examination. This is all the more important, for it is one of the three records made of Christ's references to himself as a baptized person.

We enter our protest against classifying all these verses under the metaphorical or figurative uses of the word, as most of the writers have done; or, inventing a new and strange meaning for some of these words, as the translators of the Bible Union have done.

"Then came the mother." Mark speaks of the sons. Evidently, both uttered the petition. In both Matthew and Mark the record represents Jesus answering the sons. This indicates that in both cases the sons as well as the mother had made the request.

"Grant that," etc. An ambitious request—perhaps not wickedly so—for special honors in the coming kingdom of Christ.

"Ye know not what ye ask." Referring, perhaps, to their ignorance of the spirituality of his kingdom; or, more likely, to the strange fact, not yet realized by them, that its highest honors are reserved for its greatest sufferers.

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" No doubt this refers to his future agony. Can you also die like martyrs? "And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The Baptist translators of the Bible Union, with some authority from ancient manuscripts, have omitted this line entire and its parallel in the next verse; but they retain it in Mark 10: 38-39; and there they translate it thus: "Are ye able * * * to endure the immersion which I endure?"

We arraign them here, *first*, for the inconsistency of substituting the word "*endure*" for the word which they claim must always be rendered "*immerse*." Again, for the implied idea that the immersion of Christ is still hurt-

ing him—"The immersion I endure." A vow to die might lead to agony, but that a past immersion still hurts is inconsistency number *two*.

Again, their translation implies the silly query whether two robust Gallilean fishermen were able to endure an immersion in the warm climate of Palestine. Inconsistency number *three*!

But more especially, I charge them with the far worse than inconsistency of so changing the form or voice of the verb "baptized" as to change entirely the statement of the world's great Instructor. To exhibit this grave error, and avoid using terms too scholarly for the uneducated, we assert that the words stand correctly related to each other in our common version, showing the cause and effect, or the actor and acted upon, precisely as they do in the original. This relation they have changed *just the same* as if, with our translation, we put it thus: "Are ye able to baptize the baptism which I baptize?" Or, if they translated it to the words they use, they were compelled, in truth to the original form of the verb, to render it thus: "Are ye able *to be* endured with the immersion that I am endured with?" A strange question for Jesus to ask, however pertinent it might be for some of his bigoted followers!

I see no way of escape from the charge of inconsistency number one, or the charge of perverting

the form of the verb. Inconsistencies number two and three vanish only so far as they set up the claim of a strictly spiritual meaning to this entire sentence. And this is our ground. This, seemingly, they tried to concede, and yet cling to the view that baptism *always* means immersion and must be so translated. If they had substituted for the word "baptism" a word with a spiritual meaning, or, permitting our word to stand, had given to it a spiritual meaning, all these blunders would have been avoided, and nothing lost but the assumption that baptism must always mean immersion. Being forced by two words of the text to come two-thirds of the distance to the truth, why did they not finish the journey, and allow to every form of the word a strictly spiritual meaning! For this we most earnestly contend.

The expressed ideas, divided into three sentences, are as follows: "I have a baptism." "It now baptizes me." "Are you able to be baptized with this same baptism?" Something called baptism is now working upon Christ, baptizing him, and may yet do a similar work upon these two disciples. The worker must be some spirituality personified, and the work he does must be a spiritual work. How perfectly fitting is the idea expressed by our word "covenanted," or "covenant," the word exactly expressing the spirituality of baptism. "Are ye able to be cov-

enanted with the covenant that I am covenanted with?" I see no possible form of expression that can equal or surpass it, unless we put in the word *bond*. This short word is sharply expressive of one side of the covenant, the side now under consideration. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be bound with the bond that I am bound with?" We ask not to have it so translated. Our version, as it is, will mean exactly this as soon as we learn the exact meaning of the word "baptism," as it has been incorporated into our holy religion by its adorable Founder. In fact, the word cannot be improved by translation, especially by substituting a word expressive of visible movement or action.

The absolute impossibility of a consistent uniform rendering of the word, through the entire New Testament, into any English word that would express the full, real meaning, rather than any bias against immersion, I am certain, influenced wisely the translators of the common version. I rest this conviction on no knowledge whatever of their prejudices or preferences; but I rest it solely upon a most searching and protracted study of the sacred text itself.

"The cup that I SHALL drink of, and the baptism that I AM baptized with." Against the almost universal error of identifying this baptism and his death agony, we press the tenses of

the verbs in this line. The cup is in the *future*—"I SHALL drink." The baptism is in the *present*—"I AM baptized." They may be closely connected. The one may be a kind of cause of the other. His infallible oath, "to fulfil all righteousness," certainly requires him to drink the bitter cup. Hence his baptism and his death are closely allied in thought and reality. Hence, too, his baptism is an ever-present fact, and will continue with him till death shall honor the vow and release him from it. With this view Luke, 12:50, accords, for there we find it both a present and future fact till it is "accomplished," and it *was* accomplished, for "he came not by water only, but by water and blood."

And now are ye able for this? "They say unto him, we are able." The Savior knew full well the fearful import of this answer. He knew how they would suffer. He knew that, spiritually, they must be crucified with Christ. He knew that James would be killed with the sword. He knew, far better than we, just how John would die, after he had labored long and suffered much; and, knowing this, he said, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." This sentence is so like the former as to need no added comment.

"But to sit," etc. We prefer to omit the words in italics, and then the sentence, which could

begin with *for*, would read thus : "For to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but [in the sense of only,] for whom it is prepared of my Father."

This harmonizes the statement with those clauses which represent Christ as welcoming the good to a post of honor.

The verse also suggests a good reason for suffering. High honor to great sacrifice is Heaven's plan.

Mat. 21.—23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from Heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From Heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

"*Who gave thee this authority?*" A question suggested by the act of expelling from the temple those who were profaning it. (See 12th verse.)

The Savior evidently preferred to let his own works and the voices of others tell his real nature, rather than proclaim it frequently by mere assertion. So, instead of a direct answer, he asks them about

"The baptism of John, whence was it?" The usual thought is, that Jesus asked this question, knowing they would evade the answer, and thus ingeniously prepare the way for him also to evade the answer to their inquiry. To me there seems an added, deeper design. John was the forerunner, "to prepare the way of the Lord." His baptism pledged repentance, and promised the Messiah. Now, was this promise that Christ should come—a promise linked to every ceremony of baptism by John—"from Heaven or of men?" If Heaven gave John the right to promise me, why longer doubt? Hence this question was not merely to rebuke their inconsistency, nor to corner them so that they would say, "we cannot tell?" In many other ways he could have done that; but it was to force their mind and conscience to answer correctly their own question, and admit his Messiahship and authority.

Mat. 28.—18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth.

19 ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Here are the last words of the Savior, as recorded by Matthew. Their force and beauty are truly charming. Why the eighteenth and nineteenth verses are separated by a paragraph, we do not know. The "*therefore*" of the nineteenth is based upon the "saying" of the eighteenth, binding them into one paragraph.

"All power is given unto me in Heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them."

As, in baptism, the minister pledges favor from Heaven, how important that he should receive his authority from one who has "*all power in Heaven.*" As he is to demand pledges of right conduct from men, it is equally important that he holds commission from him who has "all power in earth" to rule and govern. Acting under this high authority, they are to "go and teach all nations." The order of procedure is very natural. First, they are to give them full instruction about all the duties they owe to God, and the blessings they may receive from him. Then, with sacramental ceremony, bind them to all those duties, promising them all those blessings—not in their own name, not in "the name of Paul," or Peter, or any finite being, but "in

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

A minister to a foreign court makes all his contracts in the name of his own government. All the duties required are *to* his government. All the favors promised are *from* his government. So, every truly baptized person is under sacramental bonds to each person of the Godhead, and if they continue faithful to their contract, "the blessings of God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost" shall abide with them forever. But they must guard well their part of the covenant, and every true minister will help them so to do.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Not one duty to be neglected; not augmenting the importance of one to the neglect of others. There is a kind of double emphasis of force here—"all things whatsoever."

To the minister who does this persistently and faithfully through life,—to such the words of the Master are ever ringing, sweeter than the harps of angels: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

MARK.

Mark 1.—4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and all were baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Our notes on this Gospel may be brief. On our theme there is but little that is new, perhaps nothing except the modified phraseology, which, in the commission, appears to be a new mode of presenting the subject. In fact, according to Dr. Stowe, in the entire gospel of St. Mark there are “but twenty-four verses the substance of which is not found in Matthew and Luke.” The same author adds that Mark “very much condenses the conversations and discourses of Jesus.”

“John did baptize,” etc. (See Mat. 3: 1, 2.) One expression occurs here for the first time, we shall often meet it,—“*baptism of repentance.*” I have already urged this expression against the materialistic and in favor of the spiritual meaning of our Bible-used word “baptism. Repentance is an exercise of the human spirit, and we

boldly urge that it cannot be baptized in the sense of immersed, or sprinkled, or poured.

Should the Bible Union force their new translation upon us, then the word "*immersion*" in this sentence would appear to the reflecting mind very absurd or meaningless, unless we entirely eliminated from the word its material meaning, giving to it one purely and only spiritual.

"*Preach the baptism!*" We know from the record just what John preached. He preached the duty of repentance. He preached of One mightier coming to bless, to pardon, to save. This duty of man and this "gift of God" are the two ideas of the covenant or baptism he preached.

This *duty* and this *Jesus* are "for the remission of sins,"—the duty a condition, the Jesus an almighty saving power.

Mark 1.—8 I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him.

11 And there came a voice from Heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

See all this and more in Mat. 3: 13–17. We print these paragraphs, on which we do not add

any comment, hoping that the student, before he lays down the volume, will read carefully and consecutively every verse of the New Testament upon this theme.

Mark 7.—4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands ?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

We had thought of omitting this clause and a few other similar passages, where the word has no ceremonial or religious meaning whatever, and hence has been properly enough translated by "the seventy." But we concluded to insert them, although they are of no service to us in searching for the spirituality of the ceremony. "Except they wash," *baptize*, etc., "Baptizing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables."

"Tables." This word, in the original, means *beds* or *couches*. It has been often urged that the

immersing of these things was inconsistent and unreasonable.

Mark 10.—35 ¶ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

See Mat. 20: 20-23.

Mark 11.—30 The baptism of John, was *it* from Heaven, or of men? answer me.

This verse, with the entire paragraph, finds its parallel with notes in Mat. 21: 23-27.

Mark 16.—15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Of all that Mark has written upon this subject, this 16th verse demands most attention. It is claimed by some that this verse *proves* that baptism and faith are of equal importance as conditions of salvation. This error would do no harm if we all felt the full force of a present spirituality, truly belonging to every one who now "*is baptized*"—a spirituality lost by some who were once baptized. But if the condition expressed by the words, "*is baptized*," be equally important to the one expressed by the word "*believeth*," this verse does not prove it. From its construction, we have no proof how highly the Savior esteemed the condition expressed by the words, "*is baptized*." To illustrate this, let me frame a sentence: "The society of the good and the educated I choose, but the society of those *not* good I shun." No reader could tell by the above sentence how highly I prize education, or whether I would shun the company of the unlearned. They do know that goodness is an essential element of character in such as I choose for companions, and that I would shun all who had it not; but, as far as my statement proves, I might or I might *not* shun the uneducated.

In some forms of expression, the once-mentioned qualification must be regarded as the one least important to the speaker. Should a merchant, desiring a clerk, say, "he that is a good

penman and a temperate man can have the situation, but he that is not a good penman cannot be employed," we should all think that good penmanship was the most important qualification in the mind of the merchant. Had he, in the last half of the sentence, said that "he that is not temperate cannot be employed," it would have seemed that sobriety was the most important feature of character.

The once repeated qualification may, in the estimation of the speaker, be very unimportant or very important. I will write two illustrative statements—statements which I verily believe :

First, He that believeth and is a member of the Baptist church shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Second, He that believeth and is holy shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Holding the above sentences to be true, I hold also that in the one sentence the once repeated qualification is *very unimportant*, and in the other sentence absolutely essential. That importance or non-importance cannot be proven from the form of the sentences, but must be sought for elsewhere. So of this noted verse before us. We must go to some other text for proof that he that is not baptized "shall be damned." It comes no nearer saying this than

I did, a moment since, of saying that "he that is not a member of the Baptist church shall be damned."

It has been claimed that the two points expressed in the first wing of such a sentence are surely implied in the second. This is true only when the two points mentioned are so interwoven that the one is implied in the other. In the sentence "He that is good and truthful will be respected, but he that is not good will not be respected," there is probably implied the thought that he that is not truthful will not be respected; for the two are so united that all we say of the one seems to be implied of the other. So, in the sentence "He that believeth and is holy shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," as holiness is united ever with faith, we may infer that without holiness we will be lost. But if they are not thus united, we have no right to draw such an inference.

Now, if the expression, "is baptized," refers to some fact disconnected with a present faith,—as indifferent as a past meaningless immersion, the absence of that fact puts the soul in no more peril than would *poverty*, if truth had said, he that believeth and is *rich*, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

We do not believe that it refers to such a disconnected, useless fact, but to a present spirituality, commencing at baptism, and continuing

through the entire religious life of the believer. Had I been sure every reader would have endorsed our view of baptism, regarding it as a solemn covenant, to be kept, moment by moment, till death, I should have passed in silence the above pages; but I will let them stand for the good of all who put stress in outer ceremony, forgetting the deep spirituality.

This verse should prove the present spirituality of baptism. Notice the tense, "is baptized." If we were using the Testament of the Bible Union, the expression, "is immersed," must drop its literal meaning and take on a spiritual idea; for the exact thing expressed by the word is to be a present something till death; and the materialism of the ceremony is no part of that something.

We again remind the reader that wherever the Bible ascribes moral value to baptism, it ascribes it to that which is abiding, ever-present.

Upon this spirituality, this abiding covenant between God and our souls, we may place almost infinite emphasis. Conscience cannot overrate the sacredness of our vows. Faith cannot overrate the fullness of God's promises.

LUKE.

Luke 3.—3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias, the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said He to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

The above verses are nearly the same as we have had in Matthew and Mark.

See Mat. 3: 5-12.

Luke 3.—12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you;

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Still the exhortation continues, instructing them and urging upon them the very duties the truly repentant will perform.

“All men mused * * * whether he were the Christ or not.” This is in harmony with the suggestion that Christ, when he came, was expected to baptize. Now, is not this John, who baptizes with such zeal, the Christ? John answers them proclaiming the coming of one mightier, who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Luke 3.—21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Nothing new here, except to the record of Matthew is added the word “praying.”

That prayer was in harmony with his nature and wants. Was it not for strength and courage to keep the solemn vow which he thus made “to

fulfill all righteousness?" If so, it harmonized with the prayer in the garden, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Luke 7.—28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

By a reference to this entire chapter, we shall find the burden of discourse largely concerning John "the prophet" and "more than a prophet" of olden times.

How natural that those whom John baptized "justified God; and that the others should "reject the counsels of God against themselves."

The baptized are here seen to act in harmony with their covenant, while the unbaptized still reject divine counsel.

Luke 11.—37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

“Washed before dinner.” The word “washed” is the same as baptized. It is well to translate it by a word descriptive of external action. This verse can give us no light upon the one great object of our research—the spirituality of the ceremony of christian baptism.

Ordinary eating and drinking around our tables would give us as much information concerning the “communion of * * Christ,” as will any merely secular baptism give on the subject we are discussing.

Luke 12.—50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

These are almost the only words of Jesus upon the subject of baptism which Luke has put on record—the *only* words, except the references to the baptism of John. Luke does not report the words of Christ to John, at the time of his baptism; nor does Luke report any reference at all to the subject, when he mentions the commission to the disciples to go preach; but he does record a command for them to “tarry in Jerusalem” until they “be endued with power from on high.”

Well may we, then, linger with deep interest over this one sad verse.

The word “*suneko*,” here translated “straitened,” has these different renderings in the New Testa-

ment: "was pressed," "thronged," "held," "kept in," as if surrounded, "taken with," as by disease or force. Whedon tersely puts it, "compressed and grasped, as if by a pressure enclosing on every side."

Our views find here a fine illustration: I have a bond to be bound with; I have it now— a *present* covenant; and I am not ready yet to throw it off; I am to be baptized [bound] with it a while longer; and no being in all the universe of God or the ages of eternity ever was or ever shall be so "*straitened*," for this bond—this covenant—requires me to bear all the sins of the world in my own body on the cross.

Thank God, he kept his vow; for "he came not by water only, but by water and blood."

This is one of my favorite verses for self-examination and discipline. When my zeal for Christ needs to be quickened, I love to use it as my own, saying to myself, "I have a baptism," and with open discipline read: "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?" Sentence by sentence, as I read, I ask my heart: "Dost thou *now* do this? As sure as I now *have* a baptism real and unimpaired, so sure is it that, moment by moment, heart-beat by heart-beat, all

through life, "I renounce them all." Still I read, "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" With this baptism I, too, am straitened, not to a crucifixion of my body, I trust, but so straitened that spiritually I may "be crucified with Christ," yea, "buried with him by baptism to death"—he, by keeping his baptismal vow to the death and burial of his body; I, by keeping mine to the death and burial of all my carnality.

Luke 20.—4 The baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of men?

On this verse and the entire paragraph, see Mat. 21: 23-27.

JOHN.

John 1.—25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you whom ye know not.

27 He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me; whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and sayeth, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the son of God.

“Why baptizest thou, then, if,” etc. This harmonizes with the view that baptism, though not much practiced among the Jews, was specially expected when Christ should come.

“I baptize with water.” This expression has been urged against immersion and in favor of sprinkling or pouring. May we not better urge it against all those materialistic conceptions which substitute modes of baptizing for the real thing itself? Just test the question by putting into the above expression the full visible description. On your brow I sprinkle water *with water*. On your head I pour water *with water*. This form of thought is not much better than “I immerse your body into water *with water*.” Either of the three expressions are about like the following: At the communion table I eat and drink bread and wine *with bread and wine*.

Closely scan this line of inspiration, and see how beautifully it accords with our claim of the spirituality of the word. I covenant with water. I take your bond and give you God’s promise; and I do this, not with pen and ink, not with a literal seal pressed on wax or paper, not with ashes sprinkled over your person, but I covenant you with water,—with the simplest, brightest, purest emblem of all the blessings God will give.

"In Bethabara." (See Whedon on this verse. We quote him in part.) "Perhaps this long-debated question has been rightly settled by a late very scholarly traveler, who identifies Bethabara with Beth-Nimrah, a little north of the Bethabara on our map. It is probably the ford passed by the Baptists' great type, Elijah, the Tishbite, on his way to the ascension."

"And I knew him not but that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing." We urge attention to this verse, *especially* to the word *therefore* and its relations. A reason of "*baptizing*" was the knowledge that the Messiah "should be made manifest." It looks like proof that he could not have baptized had he not in some way known that Messiah was near at hand. The mere pledge to repent, he could have received of them, but this pledge is only one part of the baptism. There is another side to this covenant, a promise from God, and that part he never could have performed, unless he had knowledge of the coming one.

"And I knew him not," etc. Although he knew he was near, yet he knew not specifically the exact person, except as by the evidences referred to in this entire verse. God, who commissioned John, instructs him how to know the one who was "after him" as to time, but "before him" as to "real worth," "Baptizeth

with the Holy Ghost." For the analogy between water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism, see Acts 1:5.

John 3.—3 Jesus answered and said unto him, (Nicodemus,) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The central thought of the above quotation is the absolute necessity of a *spiritual* transformation, that we may be ready for "the kingdom of God."

Some modern theologians (?) are still making the mistake of Nicodemus. They are insisting that a man's body or "flesh" can and must be born again, even if he is old; and that the immersed man, coming out of the water, is the one that realizes this mysterious experience. Such an exposition of this text, and such an argument for immersion, may be new to many of my read-

ers. I never heard of it till seventeen years after my last school-day was passed. And then, I hardly know whether *surprise* or a sense of the ludicrous most affected me. But I am sure the latter far exceeded any conviction I felt under the force of the logic. The sixth verse should have settled the blunder of the modern as well as the ancient Nicodemus. It fixes the question beyond all debate, that it is *not* "flesh," but the "spirit," that is to be "born." The reference here to *water* has created a general impression that *baptism* is referred to, although the word "baptize" does not occur in any form. We will not call in question this long-accepted view of the church. But we need not believe that the once-mentioned water sustains the same importance as the thrice-mentioned Spirit. At most, the water is only a condition, while the "Spirit" is the cause, the almighty cause of a great change.

"Born of water and of the Spirit." To my mind, here, the stress lies not so much upon the *fact* of using water, as it does upon so using it as to make it the occasion of the Holy Spirit regenerating the human spirit.

To know the condition of one "born of the Spirit," read carefully 1 John: 3, 9—"He *that is* [not *was*, but *is*,] *born of God doth not commit sin* [voluntarily, knowingly,] *for* [this reason, and no other,] his seed remaineth in him, and [hence,

and for no other reason,] he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

From this verse and others, we learn that the new birth so transforms the soul, infusing into it the Spirit of God, that while it "*remaineth*" there, it forbids all voluntary sinning, and, like "seed," is germinant of all goodness.

Such a change, produced by the Spirit and power of God, is the essential qualification for the Kingdom of God. If the "water" of the text is the baptismal water, then with what intense consecration to God, and holy resolutions and mighty faith, *must* it be used, that the moment of its use may be the sublime moment of Holy Ghost transformation! There have been such water and Spirit baptisms, and there should be many more; but they are as far above some others, of the same outer appearance, as is the "fervent, effectual prayer" that "availeth" much, above the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal sentences of one standing on the corners of the streets to be seen of men. A man is blessed of prayer and of the Spirit (prayer the *condition*, the Spirit the *power*,) only when his prayer is right before God, full of faith, humility and desire. To confide in the fact of having offered a prayer of a different type, and one that was not blessed of the Spirit, would be folly. To put stress upon the fact of the use of baptismal

water, unless the Holy Spirit owns "the ordinance divine," would be equal folly, for "ye *must* be born again."

We may here express our surprise at the long debate whether the sacraments are *uniform modes* of receiving blessings, or the *mere signs* of blessings.

Is prayer, in its externals—its uttered sentences—a uniform mode of obtaining blessings, or is it merely a sign of blessings? Prayer, having been ordained of God, may be a sign,—a reminder, at least,—that there are blessings for man; but only the right kind of spiritual prayer is the mode of their reception, and only in such a prayer is the external attitude a sign of their reception.

God ordained bread and wine for communion. They are a sign of blessings. Their use is both a sign and mode of receiving blessings, but *only* when they are used aright.

God ordained water for baptism. It is a sign of blessings for man. Its sacramental use should always be associated with blessings. It is so when used aright. The blessings of Heaven rested upon Jesus before and at his baptism. So also of every infant. So of the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. And the most guilty, approaching the sacramental water with penitence and faith and holy vow to lead a new life, shall

receive blessings from the throne; but the water thoughtlessly or wickedly used is neither a sign or mode of receiving blessings. Persons so receiving it will still be "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity."

John 3.—22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.

"After these things." The plain preaching referred to about love, belief, light, etc., "The land of Judea," "The country in distinction from Jerusalem." (Whedon).

"Jesus * * * * * baptized." We understand the qualifying verse (Chap. 4: 2,) applies here, also; so that this baptizing was performed by the command of Christ, rather than by him in person. Some regard these cases of baptism like John's, in nature and design. I am not inclined to claim this. It seems rather that here is the record of the baptism of those who, early in the ministry of Jesus, covenanted directly to be his.

"John also was baptizing." I see no inconsistency in John binding others to repent and get ready for the blessings of the Messiah, even

after Jesus had began to select and consecrate his followers to their entire life's work. The primary and higher departments of a school may exist together; yet the primary may be merged into the higher as soon as that has fallen into the care of such a "wonderful" man as can govern and instruct perfectly both the lower and the higher.

"In Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there." It was very necessary for the large crowds, with their camels and beasts to be at a place where water was abundant. Every camp-ground is selected with special reference to a good supply of water, but this does not prove that they immerse their converts.

"Much water"—Greek: *Many waters*. A place of small streams from many small springs, answers best to the description and locality, and gives no proof to the mode of baptism.

John 3.—25 ¶ Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

This place is referred to by some writers in proof that purifying and baptizing are identical. We do not admit their uniform identity, for One

was baptized who never needed purifying. We have preferred to fasten upon an idea appropriate to the pure and the impure, a covenant to do all the work assigned us on earth. Such a covenant becometh the Holy One, and such a covenant may help all others forward in the way to purity.

This is all we need to admit to make the exposition of this text easy and natural. If we are speaking of elevating a nation, any subject that is supposed to bear upon their elevation is relevant to the debate, whether it be education, special legislation or something else. So baptism, related as it is to purifying, was appropriate to this discussion.

John 4.—1 When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

“More than John.” More at this date. Christ is increasing, while John is decreasing.

“Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.” Jesus baptized by agents, according to the maxim, “Whoso does by another, does by himself.” It was for the disciples to attend to the external. It was for Jesus to baptize with the Holy Ghost.

John 10.—39 Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand,

40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

“Beyond Jordan.” No proof in this expression of the distance from the river. More likely it refers to crossing over the river.

“Into the place where John at first baptized”—the Bethabara mentioned in Chap. 1: 28—the place where Christ was baptized. Now that persecution has assailed Him, he retires to this sacred spot, more quiet now than when the “voice crying” drew the multitudes there.

“And there He abode;” and “*there*” and everywhere I hear Him saying, “I have a baptism,
* * * and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.”

ACTS.

Acts 1.—4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

We come now to examine what might be called the second gospel of St. Luke. In the first, he tells us of the work of Christ while on earth laying the foundation of His church. In the second, he tells of the same Christ extending that church "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." In "the former treatise" the second person of the Trinity incarnate is ever before us. Now that He has gone up on high, the third person of the Trinity becomes prominent, abiding with, purifying and energizing all true workers. The former was marked by holy precept, this by heroic practice. In the first, there was promise; all through this there is fulfillment.

“Wait for the promise.” Here the *fulfillment* of promise is called “the *promise*.” The note or bill given by one of ample resources and honor, passes at par value, and may be called money, although strictly it is but the pledge of money. We would fix attention here, not so much to show the meaning of the above sentence as to illustrate a law of language which applies to the primary and secondary ideas of our word “baptize.” As the word promise, which usually means *making a pledge*, here means the keeping of it, so baptizing refers not only to *covenant making*, but also to *covenant keeping*.

The next verse illustrates these meanings. Like beautiful parallels the two expressions, “the promise of the Father” and “ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,”

“Baptized * * * baptized.” The comparative meaning of the word, as used in the first and last part of this verse, demands careful attention. Our view has been expressed already. Now, as we come to the frequent use of the word in these two-fold relations, it becomes us to indicate more fully the reason for our mode of interpretation.

In the sentences “baptized with water” and “baptized with the Holy Ghost” there is evidently some resemblance of meaning to the word as used in both places.

Can baptizing with the Holy Ghost resemble anything that is visible or material in any mode of water baptism? Or is not the only resemblance to be found in that which, in water baptism, is spiritual? Carefully scan the assumed materialistic resemblances, and there underlies all such comparisons the conception of the materiality,—I should say the fluidity, of the Holy Ghost.

It seems strange that so many of our friends should have assumed that the Bible expression, "pour out of my Spirit," suggests a material motion, like water poured out. The word "*ekkeo*," found in Acts 2: 17, 18, 23, and twice translated "pour out," and once "hath shed forth," has, according to Liddell and Scott, in the New Testament, this, as well as other meanings, "*to lavish*." One of Webster's definitions of "pour" is, "to throw in profusion." In all reason, the expression, "pour out of my Spirit," has especial reference to *the abundance of its bestowment*.

If the expression took its origin from the pouring of water, and if the one is the figure of the other, then the analogy may run along thus far. Both are of God. Both are given to bless. Both are given freely, lavishly. But to carry the analogy forward, and assume that the Holy Ghost comes into contact with men by the same mode of approach that water does when poured

on them from a bowl or cup, is an assumption totally unfounded. It is an assumption involving the contradiction of a material Spirit—a Holy Ghost with at least some of the attributes of water—enough of those attributes so that both can be handled or used exactly alike in the process of baptizing.

Equally objectionable is the idea of a literal immersion into the Holy Ghost. Any expression or conception which involves the materiality of the Holy Ghost is absolutely revolting—whether we talk or think of it as filling a pond or a pitcher, a tank or a tumbler, to be used in immersing or pouring.

Had not the visible, material part of water-baptism been overrated, a resemblance between that materiality and Holy Ghost baptism would never have been sought for. The utter impossibility of materiality being like spirituality, coupled with the absolute certainty that the Holy Ghost baptism is entirely a spiritual work, should long ago have led to a full recognition of the true character of water baptism as a work always spiritual in its central, true nature, even though there is an outer form appended thereto.

But while we claim for the word in the two relations some resemblance, we need not look for exact identity of meaning. Were the work done by the Holy Ghost the same as that done by a minister with water, then its doings are but a

superfluity — a useless repetition. Then, too, the Holy Ghost has done nothing more than a human agent had already done.

This is one of the verses in which the exact thought “purify” does not readily substitute itself in the place of baptize.”

“John truly purified with water, but ye shall be purified with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” If “John truly purified,” why need another to purify?

So our chosen word “covenant,” with identity of meaning in both clauses, would be open to objection. If once *truly* covenanted, why again need to be covenanted?

But with the variation of meaning already defined, all is harmonious.

John, with water, covenants, but “he that cometh after” shall with the Holy Ghost keep covenant; and, as in the last verse, promise *kept* bears the same name as promise made, so it is in this fifth verse also.

Other illustrations of the same use of language we can readily mention.

The Lamb of God covenanted for ages, and the Lamb really slain by the keeping of that covenant, are both a real Savior.

An agent of a county bargains with a man to build a *bridge*. That bargain we call a contract. On the one side the man says “I will build it so and so.” On the other the agent says “the

county will pay you so much." Of the work he has to do to fulfill his bargain, he can say, "This is my contract." Of the money he receives, he can call it *contract* money.

The baptized have made a covenant—a contract. Their life's work for Jesus is their covenant; their contract, their *baptism*.

Like the work of the bridge-builder, which is called his contract, so our life's work is called our baptism. It is what we promised when we made the baptismal bargain.

But our baptismal contract has also another side. God's minister pledged to us, if we did our work, the blessings of the Holy Ghost, to purify, to comfort, to save in Heaven. Now, all these blessings of the Holy Ghost are the fulfillment of the divine part of this baptism with water. They are God's baptism (contracted blessings) given to us as by contract specified. And as these spiritual blessings are the best part of the baptism, they are the *final* part, the *divine* part—the benediction of Heaven to the water baptism recently or long since administered to us. Heaven help us to this best of all baptisms!

Acts 2.—37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“Baptized * * * for the remission of sins.” Here is one of the few verses where baptism is plainly made a condition, or at least one of the conditions of “remission of sins.” It is not easily explained by those who define baptism as merely “a sign of regeneration.” To advise a man to accept the sign of regeneration, before he *is* regenerated, seems awkward, to say the least.

This verse arrested our attention, and held us a long time in that protracted period of Bible study alluded to in the Preface. Upon it we might have drifted away from our former views, and set up the claim that “remission of sins” was the one uniform idea or object of the ordinance; but with all the Testament upon this subject spread out before us we could not possibly think so. The baptism of the Gentiles (Acts 10), and especially the baptism of Jesus, forbade with tremendous emphasis such a conclusion.

These several recorded baptisms, and also the Savior’s words concerning himself as “baptized,” guided us—yes, *forced* us—to a deeper meaning—to a generic idea that comprehended all these specific cases on record. That deep, all-comprehensive idea we have named. It chimes in here grandly—repent and be baptized (covenanted) for the remission of sins; repent, and by sacrament

or solemn oath, bind yourselves to the Triune God for all of life's duties, and let God's minister thereon pledge you heavenly favor, and apply to your person the God-ordained emblem of all of those favors, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here, again, water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism are closely allied.

But at this point we must again insist that these great blessings are for those who are with hearty sincerity truly in spirit bound, or covenanted, to all of their duty here.

Acts 2.—41 ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

This verse is good authority for the practice of our baptist friends of receiving members into the church by baptism.

The covenantal character of the ceremony harmonizes well with this verse and their practice. But the surrounding history is not quite as congenial to their usage of immersion, and especially to their *theory* of its *immense* importance.

The sermon began at nine o'clock. It might have been ended, and the candidates duly examined preparatory for baptism, by one o'clock.

That there is a slight possibility of their immersion that afternoon, yes, in two hours more,

I could admit, *if* I knew there were thirty men authorized to baptize, and thirty good places for immersion; and if I could also believe that the city, displeased at this new excitement, would quietly allow those thirty places to be used; and also that these thirty hundred who came together, not expecting any such events, were still duly ready and willing to be immersed.

A thoughtful mind can admit all this a hundred times easier than it can account for the utter silence and careless brevity of the historian on all these points, provided that historian held the views of modern baptists, and was inspired to write this history by the All-seeing and All-loving One, who knew how millions of his children would grope for ages in a darkness that should exclude them from communion with his true church!

No baptist historian, since the days of Luke and Paul, have failed to make all the rest of the world understand their usage! Is it not strange that the *inspired* Baptists were so terribly careless?

Acts 8.—12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

14 Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John;

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

There is nothing very new or peculiar here, except the baptizing of Simon, who seems not to have been duly converted.

It is said of him (verse 21) "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God; also (verse 23), "Thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. It appears as though he did not fully consecrate himself to God, although he believed the preaching and received the external ceremony.

Acts 8.—35 Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

While the baptism of three thousand in Jerusalem in less than one day looks the least like an immersion of any on record, the baptism of the Eunuch, recorded above, seems, more than any other, to favor the practice of immersion. It seems enough like it to be a fair apology for immersion; yet it falls far short of that absolute positiveness which, in our view, characterizes every essential duty of man. We stand on the broad ground that every duty necessary to church membership and salvation is made *so plain* that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." It seems more like an immersion, for it is the *only* place recorded of a march or even a movement of *one step* from the place of the preaching *in order to* administer the ordinance. If the case of the jailor (Acts 16: 33) is thought to be an exception, we ask you to examine our note thereon. But this movement from the chariot to the water might have been for other reasons than to immerse. I have traveled with buggy some *forty thousand* miles, never having in my reach enough water to sprinkle on the brow of a believer. Perhaps, then, he had to go to the stream to sprinkle; perhaps he went there to pour water upon him; *perhaps*, to *immerse* him. Now, I can think of several ways in which the *Author* of this Bible, were he one-tenth part as anxious for me to be immersed as some of my good neighbors are, could have so worded this or

some other place as to take all this doubt away. Let it have been said, "Yes, I see water, but there is not enough in this little rill." It was in the region of "Gaza, which is desert." I wrote *little rill* as an inference, for *now* there are no large streams there; and this expression of the Eunuch is a sudden, short exclamation—"See, water!"—as if to call attention to what might have been unnoticed. But, admit a late big rain and an abundance. Then let the expression be, "If yonder water is sufficient, what doth hinder?" Or, let there be some hint at the quantity needed for baptism. Or, here or somewhere, let it be said that, although unprepared for the ceremony, yet in their zeal they heeded not their drenched apparel, and all this doubt disappears.

Mark well this point. *If* the theory of the immersionists be true, then the Author of the Bible wants all his church to believe *in* and *practice* immersion. He foresaw the dispute and doubt of the ages to come, and took sides with the immersionists, and gave out this Bible as a perfect guide in faith and practice; yet, in all its history there is not a hint at any kind of preparation to immerse; or at any difficulty in immersing at any place where they were preaching, in houses, in jails, in Jerusalem—everywhere or anywhere, *except* in this chariot. There is not a hint at baptismal robes or a wet garment, or a

baptistry. There is no reference to a providential care over minister or subjects thus exposed. Modern Baptist writings are full of incidental hints on such points. They have beat the inspired writers more than a million fold in these regards; for, while millions misunderstand the *inspired* Baptist, every one knows the exact views and usages of the uninspired ones!

But I may be asked: "Is there not the same uncertainty about sprinkling as there is about immersion? And if the All-wise Author of the Bible disapproved of immersion, and required sprinkling, could he not have made this mode *perfectly* plain?" And to these questions I give an affirmative reply; and with this reply enter my protest against the censure and ridicule sometimes cast upon those who in good conscience prefer immersion. The above argument works equally well against the advocate of either mode exclusively. If immersion was *badly* out of place, I believe God would in kindness have disabused the minds of millions of his worthy followers who have already submitted to it.

Some thoughtful mind may urge another question here: "Why did God leave the mode indefinite?"

Our theory is under no more obligation to answer this question than any other, yet it is far more capable of doing so. The mode is indefinite, because, in all reason, it is absolutely

unimportant. Again, the exact mode may have been, of design, a little obscure, lest the masses should rely too much upon their having conformed thereto. Did they all know the exact externals, they might

“Have rested in the outer form,
Nor knew its deep design.”

In proof of this danger, I refer the reader to the great stress laid upon the externals of baptism by all those who are very confident that they do know the mode, and have conformed to it.

Far better the dispute of the ages than the childish idea that “immersion is baptism,” or “sprinkling is baptism.” And while these propositions are discussed, *the debate will never come to an end*. I claim not a prophet’s vision, nor do I need it to declare that this debate will last till the final judgment, if these externals are the things debated, and if to them special importance is attached. Undertake to attach great importance to the externals of a spiritual religion, and to a precise *form* of those externals, and a form which God has not made plain, and man cannot make plain, and the undertaking is doomed to absolute failure. I believe God wanted the debate to go on till the sublime truth should be evolved that the essential of water baptism is *not* the sprinkling, nor the pouring, nor the im-

mersing, but a grand spiritual work that should be done while water is used; and a work as far superior to the thing hitherto discussed, as is the soul superior to the body, or the Holy Ghost and all it can confer superior to a pond or a pitcher of water.

I do not wish to treat with too much scorn the long debate of the past, but I am sincerely and intensely in earnest upon this subject.

Childish ideas must give place to manly thoughts. Ask two children "What is the Lord's supper?" Says the little Methodist, "It is kneeling down at the altar, and eating bread and drinking wine." "That is *not* so," says the Presbyterian; they sit in their seats, and the deacons hand it 'round, and they eat and drink." Their dispute is childish. It is about the mode of receiving the externals.

Ask children, "What is marrying?" and with confidence they will tell of the ceremony—the standing up, the taking hold of hands, etc., etc.—not aware, it may be, that these are the appendages of a spiritual reality—the *union, by covenant, of two persons*, so that henceforth in duty, in privilege and in law they are one.

So of baptizing. The childish idea has been, "it is sprinkling," or "it is pouring," or "it is immersing." This substitution of the material accompaniments of a spiritual reality for the reality itself, and then for ages quarreling over

this materialism, is certainly deserving the scorn and contempt of all thinking minds.

Acts 9.—17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Saul had been convinced that the Jesus he had opposed was verily divine. He had been blind three days. Of the cause of that blindness Whedon remarks: "It was perhaps the powerful collision of spiritual forces—the divine upon the human, which drove the perceptive power of Saul inward and disabled it from action." While blind he was led into Damascus.

Ananias, in a vision, *is told* "to go * * * and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus." To relieve his fear and rejoice his heart, he is told that "he prayeth" and "is a chosen vessel to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."

"And Annanias went his way and entered into the house; and putting his hands upon him," uttered words of promise and of power.

“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

Language can hardly be plainer in proof that Paul received baptism in a house and standing upon his feet. The interpolation* by Lechler of a journey to the banks of a river is good evidence that a far better Bible for exclusive immersion could be written than is the Bible our God has given us. One writer claims that “baptism in this case was preceded by faith, justification, regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and even the special bestowment of the Holy Ghost.” Comparing these verses with Paul’s account of the same in the twenty-second chapter, we hesitate to indorse that claim. To my mind it is neither important nor certain whether he was regenerated just before or exactly at the time of his baptism, Paul’s own version of the case looks as if he so called upon God by prayer and faith, and so consecrated himself that then and *therefore* his sins were all removed.

Acts 10.—44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

*See Dr. Whedon.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

“While Peter yet spake these words”—alluding to the discourse recorded in the former part of the chapter, showing that “God is no respecter of persons,” etc.

The sermon occurred in a house. This seems to be the meaning of the 27th verse. It is plainly stated, in Chap. 11, v. 12, “We entered into the man’s house.” There is no intimation or appearance of their leaving the house to baptize.

“Can any man forbid water.” Proof that water was used. It seems also to have been in a condition to handle, to carry in a dish, or to forbid it being thus carried. We lay no special stress on this form of expression; yet, from our standpoint, it is interesting to notice how water seems always to have been handled, rather than the candidate.

“The Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.” This “astonished” Jewish believers. The gift of the Holy Ghost is referred to in the 47th verse as a *past* event, as Peter proposes to baptize them. The language puts it beyond a doubt that their true conversation, embracing the work of the Holy Ghost, preceded their baptism. In harmony with this is the statement

of Peter, while they were debating the question of circumcising their Gentile converts, Acts 15: 8, 9: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

So plainly does this record put their salvation before their baptism, that those divines of my acquaintance who claim baptism as one of the indispensable conditions of the remission of sins, admit all we claim as to this history.

They try to evade the force of the argument by the claim that this was miraculous, and hence not in the order of the regular plan of saving men. A miracle may be wrought to establish or carry out the plan of salvation, but a miracle that evades or sets aside an essential condition of that plan is an unheard-of thing in the realm of truth.

It will be remembered that this was one of the *three distinct classes* of baptized persons whose history held us in study until we discovered an idea which harmoniously adjusts the ordinance to these diverse characters.

We must so define its nature that subjects of the kingdom can receive it as appropriately as those who seek to become such.

Jesus, the eternally pure, and Gentiles, recently purified, did receive the ordinance. This

is as plain as that awakened sinners were ever advised to be baptized. I know of no theological idea, save that of covenanting, that adjusts itself exactly to these three conditions.

Acts 11.—15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 For inasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?

Here is a repetition of the history of the conversions of the Gentiles, harmonizing with the last record, but adding nothing new or peculiar to it.

Acts 13.—23 Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

“Preached * * * * the baptism.” See Mark 1: 4.

Acts 16.—13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made:

and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

“On the Sabbath.” The Jewish Sabbath. Early Christians did not disturb the sacredness of the seventh day, even after they preferred the first day of the week as their own favorite, hallowed day.

“By a river side.” Supposed to be one of the tributaries of the Strymon, which is nineteen miles from Phillippi.

“Where prayer is wont to be made.” Biscoe, as quoted by Whedon, gives abundant proof “that it was common with the Jews to choose the shore as a place highly fitted to offer up their prayers.”

How strangely careful to give some other reason than baptism for being here at this river!

“Lydia, * * whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended,” etc. This is a text that we heard used triumphantly in a debate as to whether the Holy Ghost ever operated on the heart of man, except by using or applying God’s word. While the speaker admitted that the

usual mode was through the word, he maintained that *here* was a plain case of its operation *prior* to the spoken word—"opening her heart, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul."

"Baptized and her household." One of the *five cases* of household baptisms, of which we may say more hereafter.

"*If ye have judged me,*" etc. Recognizing the idea that she did not expect to entertain them unless they came as fellow-workers in Christ.

There is also the plain inference that Lydia was the prominent personage—perfectly congenial to the idea that the others were servants, or children.

Acts 16.—30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Following the conversion of Lydia was the cure of a damsel whose "soothsaying brought gain." This led to *rage* and censure, while Paul and Silas got "many stripes" and an "inner

prison," with "their feet fast in the stocks." Then follows "prayer and praises," "great earthquake" and "doors open," and alarmed keepers about to kill themselves but forbidden by Paul. Then they rush into the inner prison.

"And brought them out." Out from among the cells of the inner prison. Then the keeper cries, "Sir, what must I do to be saved?" And they preach to him and "all that were in the house." In ancient prisons, as in modern jails, the house where the keeper and his family reside is frequently a part of the prison or jail building, an upper or adjoining apartment.

"And he took them," etc. This looks like a change of places from the preaching before the baptismal service. But the object is mentioned. Their lacerated backs, on which their weight rested through the first part of that sad yet joyous night, must be washed. The first movements of grace will make men kindlier. That the leading object was to wash their stripes is further evident from the fact that the keeper, not the preacher, led the movement—*"he took them."* There is no hint at their going out of the enclosure of the prison building. He had no right to take them away. Evidently they went to a room where there were accommodations for ordinary ablutions, handwashing and the like.

"And washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his." How quietly done! How little ado!

"Brought them into his house." Back again to the apartment of the family rooms. They are still in prison, for the magistrates become alarmed the next day on hearing that they had treated Roman citizens thus.

Still later the magistrates "came and besought them, and brought them out and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison." ("Verses 39 and 40.)

Acts 18.—8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Paul is now at Corinth. The last verse finds him in "a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue."

Evidently Crispus was present. Paul says*: "I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, * * * and the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."

It is then evident that some other person baptized some of these "many."

* 1 Cor. 1: 14, 16.

Acts 19.—2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized ? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

“Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” This question is addressed by Paul to “certain disciples” at Ephesus. It seems as if Paul supposed that they were fully initiated into the doctrines of Christ. They knew something of Jesus, for all whom John baptized heard of “Him which should come after, that is, Jesus Christ.” Yet they tell Paul, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,”

“Unto what then were ye baptized?” The peculiar appropriateness of this question is seen in the fact that the true followers of Christ were always baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

The fact that Christian baptism is frequently alluded to with the briefer expression (as in the

5th verse): "baptized in the name of Jesus," is no proof that the Triune formula was omitted. "The name of Jesus" refers to his authority, and to the formula he gave us for baptizing, and to the *only baptismal formula* in the universe, in which he has authorized the use of his name.

Paul was so well aware of this fact that their ignorance of the Holy Ghost was totally unaccountable until he learned that they were baptized "unto John's baptism."

On the fourth verse, Dr. Whedon remarks: "John's baptism, when received, obligated the people to repent anew of sin, in expectation of a soon-coming Messiah." With a slight modification, this expresses the covenantal idea to which we constantly adhere. Admit that this "expectation" had a foundation in the divine promise of John's baptism, and it is our uniform definition.

In John's baptism the people promised repentance, and John, as God's minister, promised a Messiah.

The Doctor adds: "Yet, when Messiah came, he required a new baptism, obligating a consecration to him, whereby the spirit of promise would be poured out upon them, and they be emancipated into the full liberty of the sons of God."

Nearer still is this language to a definition of a covenant. Here is the "*consecration*," the "*ob-*

ligating," "whereby the *spirit* * * * *would be poured out*," etc. Admit that the promise of blessings is in the baptismal ceremony (and the good doctor's "*whereby*" seems to admit it), and here is the covenant—duties to be performed, blessings to be received. And the blessings did come, for "the Holy Ghost came on them."

Here it is certain that "about twelve" persons were re-baptized. But the two covenants were so different in their nature that the making of the *first* did not excuse them from the *second*, so different that this history gives no authority for the repetition of the ceremony in ordinary cases.*

Acts 22.—16 And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Paul is now in "Jerusalem"—"in the temple," telling the history of his life and conversion to christianity. The above verse is part of the speech of Ananias to Paul. It links together, in regard to time, three things—*baptism, purification and prayer*. Their relation as to cause and effect is especially interesting. Paul is to "*be baptized*." Annanias applies the water, and assures him of the divine favor. The promise of God, uttered by the minister, is so much more sublime than the promise of the man that the

*Concerning one unworthily baptized. See final note.

minister might be regarded pre-eminently the actor in the covenantal part of the work even, but in addition to this he is the one only actor in applying water to the subject, or in bringing subject and water into contact with each other. Now, *why* the exhortation to Paul to "wash away thy sins"? This sentence is peculiar. Why does it not read, "Arise and be baptized, and *have* thy sins washed away," etc. This last form of speech might have been erroneously construed. The form of sentence might then have been cited in proof that the work of Ananias in baptizing Paul was the conditional cause of the removal of his sin. Thus the externals of baptism might have received undue credit for the removal of sin. But the form of expression guards us completely against such an idea. It stands almost alone in the Bible in ascribing the removal of sin to the agency of the sinner as the cause. Whether the removal of sin be attributed to the doings of Ananias or Paul, we should of course understand this action to be only the conditional cause, allowing divine power alone to be the real, efficient cause proper. Now, to whose agency does revelation propose, in the case of Paul, to give the honor of the cause (conditional) of his conversion? Not to the doings of Ananias, not to the use of the externals of baptism? No! no! but only to what Paul did. Paul did the "calling on the name of the Lord," the taking hold of Jesus by prayer and promise.

True prayer and an oath to do our duty have some affinities. In both the soul takes hold of its God with holy desires and purposes.

Paul did this, and it was a thousand times more important in washing sins away, than the work of an Ananias or any priestly agency in the universe.

This harmonizes with our Protestant theology. The work which one man can do for the salvation of another should be regarded as help or assistance. It may aid us grandly, but if it is an absolute necessity to it, then our Heaven is absolutely dependent on some things which other men can do for us.

We prefer to believe that the exact work any one man can do for himself, involves every essential condition of his salvation; while the cause—the procuring and efficient cause of his salvation—is found entirely in the Triune God.

In the ordinances of the Church is there something that is really essential? If so, we insist that it is the spiritual exercises of the person receiving the ordinances, and not the work of the minister or priest who handles the materials of the ordinance. The work of another may help us much, but I love to cherish the conviction that all the *essential* conditions of one's salvation are with himself, and all the saving efficacy is with the Redeemer. The Almighty, with my consent and co-operation, can make my Heaven sure.

ROMANS.

Ro. 6.—1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection.

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

This is the only reference to baptism in the book of Romans. It is alluded to incidentally as a subordinate thought, while the leading theme is the death or destruction of our carnality. Yet it is a sublimely important thought that can bear upon and promote so great an end. With the copy of the Bible now open before me to this passage, I need not turn a leaf to count

the words "death" and "dead" used eight times with the plain meaning, *the destruction of sin*; and on the same two pages are fifteen other words and phrases expressive of the same thought.

Because of the spirituality of the work upon which Paul is treating, the reference to baptism, which, as we have seen, is always spiritual, whether by water or the Holy Ghost, is peculiarly relevant. We expect also to see here added fitness and beauty to the covenantal idea.

"Shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Keep that word "*dead*" in mind. What is it that is dead? Not our physical body, but our carnality—"the body" (*spiritual* body) "of sin." How did it die? Who has been blessed with its death? And *if dead*, how has it been disposed of?

"Know ye not that so many of us" (exactly that number and those persons) "as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

"*Baptized into.*" *To* or *unto* is equally as good as "*into*," and more in harmony with the usual translation of the Greek word "*eis*," as it is used in Romans.

This word occurs one hundred and fifteen times in this letter, and is rendered "to" and "unto" forty-five times, and "in" and "into" only sixteen times. In five of those sixteen places there is no apparent choice between the two translations. Of the remaining eleven, three

are in the above third and fourth verses; and we rather prefer the "to," or "unto," although it is not essential to our main theory.

"Baptized into (or to) Christ"—*bound*, covenanted *to him*, and hence covenanted or bound "to his death." This fully explains why we are "dead"—"dead to sin." As sure as Christ, crucified on the cross, died bodily to save us, so sure is it that, having been bound by covenant to him and his death, and "crucified with him," all carnal affections died in us, and all that is dead is ready to be *buried*—yes, and in this case *is* "*buried*," as we shall learn in the next verse.

"Therefore we are buried." The word "buried," here, in its *root* meaning, refers to the funeral services, whether by *burning* or *burial*. It has strict reference to the final putting away or disposal of the dead. Christ's dead body was put away—buried. Our carnal nature, which is dead, is also put away—"buried."

There has been a difference of opinion as to the *tense*—whether "are" or "were" has the best authority. This point is not essential. The burial is brought about in the same *way*, whether past or present. And by what means *are* or *were* we "buried with him"? The answer is plain. It is, "by baptism to death."

It is *not* by a plunge into water, even if we were plunged therein; but it is our bond, or covenant, holding us to Christ—to the agony, if

need be, of a *death* like his, and which promises all the merits of that death—first, to kill, and then bury, or put away, all our carnality.

There is an additional fact, that is here expressed. Baptism, which so interlinks us with Christ, buried him as well as us; for “buried with him by baptism” expresses this idea, that both Christ and ourselves are *buried*.

This chimes in exactly with all that we have learned of the baptism of Jesus. His infallible oath to die, “to fulfill all righteousness,” this “baptism to death” straitened” him till it was *finished*. Thus, by baptism, Christ was killed and then buried. In the same way, and in blessed company and sympathy with him, our baptismal oath, *if* it holds and moves us, as his did him, and if it is faithfully kept as was his, will surely kill and bury, or put away, all that is carnal.

The resemblance continues. After Christ was “dead” and “buried,” he “was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even so we also [after the body of sin is dead and buried] should walk in newness of life.”

The analogy still goes on.

“If we have been planted together.” *Sum-phutos*, here rendered “planted together,” is also rendered “grown together” and closed, referring *not so much* to our being put together as that we *stay* together, like two scions of fruit, which,

having been grafted, remain so, giving the nature and condition of one to the other.

Now, if thus we are together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the *likeness* of his resurrection."

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." Another mode of putting the same idea of a death to sin into words, "that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin," thus getting back to the starting point, "that we should not live any longer in sin."

Carnality is "dead," "buried," "crucified," "destroyed." Of course we are "freed from sin." And our baptismal *bond* or union to Christ" occasioned its death and burial, its crucifixion and destruction.

We have thus given our views of the exact train of thought carried out in the above quotation. We know not what objections will be raised to them; but we do claim for them some excellencies. And first, these views harmonize with all that we have learned of the spirituality of baptism.

Again, they allow this reference to baptism to be, not an abrupt dodge away from the theme in hand, but in perfect harmony with this whole section, and also the general scope of thought in the entire book of Romans.

Finally, we avoid the inconsistency of calling that "*buried*" which is still alive, and that, too, which we do not wish to kill. This is all the more favorable to our view from the fact that the Greek word *Thapto*, from which comes the word *bury*, was more apt to suggest to the Roman an *entombment* or *burning* than a covering up with dirt.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE.

For a *very* able and extended treatise on this paragraph, harmonizing, I think, in the main with our theory, but carrying it out more fully and clearly, we refer the reader to Bishop Merrill's late work on "Christian Baptism."

Perhaps I ought to state that I had written this entire volume before that work appeared. Hence no more references to it. I was about to send the manuscript to a publisher when I learned that his work was in press. I delayed awhile in order to see its contents and watch its influence. Still longer have I delayed in order to see how I should regard my own work after much added meditation.

Ro. 6.—17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

We place this verse among our notes, not because of the bearing it really has upon our

theme, but because of the peculiar emphasis we have heard given to it in an appeal for a specific mode of baptism. The verse expresses gratitude for their obedience to the very things preached or delivered to the hearers. After reading *all* the words of Jesus and Paul and the rest of the Bible, and listening to the utterances of the majority of our pulpits, the text, repeated, ought to enjoin upon us *mainly* the duty of *repentance, faith, charity and earnest work for human welfare*. All the more pity for the audiences, from whose pulpits, when uttered, it seems only to mean, "*Be immersed!* BE IMMersed!!"

The real and assumed use of this text reminds me of a scriptural lesson which I heard read from one of those same pulpits, and the use they tried to put it to. The lesson was the last part of the Sermon on the Mount. As the preacher read, "He that heareth these sayings of mine AND DOETH THEM;" and again, "He that heareth these sayings of mine and DOETH THEM NOT," the *peculiar* expression and look of the preacher, and nod of some of his hearers, showed clearly that they regarded the words as a tremendous blow to those of us who had not obeyed their doctrine of immersion.

Yet, how different the real meaning of those words, as they close up a sermon of such lofty spirituality and blameless morality—a sermon, in one respect, totally unlike any one I ever heard from that pulpit, in that it began, and progressed, and ended, without one single reference to the ordinance of baptism!

I. CORINTHIANS.

I. Cor. 1.—12 Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any of you should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Paul is rebuking the Church at Corinth for their sins. Petty dissensions and divisions, and too much ado over leaders, often go hand in hand.

"Is Christ divided?" A rebuke for divisions. There is enough of Christ to be the "Chief" of every loving group in the universe. But it is impossible to divide him, and give quarrelsome groups a part.

"Was Paul crucified for you?" The first rebuke for an undue regard of men. We had better *look to Jesus*, saying—

"I've none but thee in Heaven above,
Or on this empty ball."

How true to modesty and good sense that Paul singled out his pet friends, and chided *them*, rather than the admirers of Apollos and Cephas.

"*Or, were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*" Second form of rebuke for special partiality to Paul. How pertinent the covenantal idea! Did you bind yourselves to cleave to Paul? Are you vowed to Paul or to Jesus?

To baptize unto man is possible. The next passage to be noted is a specimen (I. Cor. 10: 1-2); and in *that* it was all right, but here it would have been all wrong. And Paul is glad to deny the charge, and, in denying it, expresses his views very plainly concerning the relative importance of baptism and preaching.

"I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." This refers, of course, only to Corinth. The next verse gives the reason why he was thankful:

"Lest any should say," etc. Yet, the reason would not be sufficient to account for this gratitude, *if* Paul had regarded their salvation, or even their regular church communion, dependent upon their baptism.

The sixteenth verse seems to be a correction resulting from an after-thought. Nor is Paul yet certain whether he "baptized any other" except "the household of Stephanas." Wonderfully forgetful was that great mind concerning the central idea of a modern "Christian church!"

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." This plainly expresses the fact that with Paul preaching was his peculiar duty. It harmonizes well with the "woe is me if I preach not." The "*necessity* is laid" on him to preach the Gospel. Baptism and everything else is subordinate to this one idea of his sublime life. Is this the feeling of all who stand in the modern pulpit?

I. Cor. 10.—1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Paul urges continued faithfulness. Having started well, we should "so run that we may obtain." The Israelites started well, yet "many of them were overthrown in the wilderness."

"All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea."

"And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea!" This verse will bear close study. It is a specimen of condensed history, such as Paul

often gives. Its more specific outline in Exodus, fourteenth chapter, will help to unfold its full meaning. There we learn of the strange "cloud," "*light* to the camp of Israel," but "*dark* to the Egyptians."

We shall also learn that the Lord "made the sea dry." Made it so in accordance to a command and promise to Moses.

"Lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea." And in another verse that "the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea."

There is no evidence that a drop of water touched the Israelites from the cloud or the sea. It is certain that there was no immersing there, until "the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the hosts of Pharaoh." Why then the statement concerning our fathers, that they "were all baptized unto Moses?" The last verse of the chapter alluded to states: "And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses."

Now we can understand the text. The miracle of "cloud" and "sea," wrought by the power of God and instrumentality of Moses, made them for the time cleave by faith to God as their Ruler,

and to Moses as their leader. This was their consecration to Moses, their covenant or oath of allegiance to him as commander or leader of their hosts. It was a *dry*, yet *real*, baptism. This is another text which forces upon the word a spiritual meaning. It is an unnatural and unauthorized assumption to say that they were sprinkled or poured in the name of Moses, by that sea or cloud of light. It is equally so to think of their immersion into that cloud; and it is simply contradicting the record of Exodus to say that they were immersed in the sea. Three times the word "dry" is used, in plain contrast to such an assumption.

I. Cor. 12.—13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Again Paul pleads for unity. The context proves that the "one body" here named is "the body of Christ," or "the church."

Its spirituality is also clearly proven. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Many of the things given are then designated "wisdom," "word of knowledge," "faith," etc., etc. By what process can we belong to this body? Our text answers, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into" it.

Not by human hands. All they can do is useless, unless the Holy Spirit attends the ordinance. If to the ceremony there is a reference, it is to the ceremony where the Spirit attends in all its saving power. But the tense seems to take all thought away from the ceremony to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the *present* tense.

Are we thus baptized? Then, be we "Jew or Gentile," Baptist or Methodist, "bond or free," we have been "made to drink into one Spirit."

I. Cor. 15.—29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

Paul is arguing the resurrection of the human body and the immortality of our entire nature. This sublime fact of a future life explains our baptismal oath, making its rigid severity appear perfectly harmonious with our destiny.

We have already seen that this covenant is too sacred to be broken, even to save life. The baptism of Jesus was unto death. Of the children of Zebedee the same was required. The whole army of martyrs have actually died rather than sever the holy bond of their consecration to Jesus.

Now what shall they do which are thus baptized if the dead rise not? If there be no resurrection, no future life, binding men to the con-

dition of the dead or to death is binding them to annihilation or real nothingness; but if there be a reality in the future life, the case is totally different.

The words "the dead," in many places, refer to a *condition* rather than to persons, and the word *death*, in their place, would express their meaning quite as well.

"Whom he raised from *the dead*," i. e., *from death*. Over *forty* such examples could be cited in the New Testament. Make the substitution here, and the question is perfectly plain, and this "most difficult verse of the New Testament" is difficult no longer.

What shall they do that are baptized [covenanted] for [unto] death, if the dead rise not at all? *Why* are they then baptized for death, bound or sworn so rigidly that they must die rather than desert their post? The baptismal oath to obey requires us to "fear not them that can kill the body." Resurrection and life to come make this requirement reasonable.

GALATIANS.

Gal. 3.—27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

This is one of many verses which force upon the word *baptize* an elevated, spiritual meaning. Note well the language: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on* Christ."

They who "have put on Christ," and they *only*, "have been baptized" truly. Such are they who *consecrated* all—*covenanted* all to Christ.

The expression, "have been baptized into Christ," must comprehend something *deeper* than the visible ceremony. If in this verse it be regarded as the equivalent of "have been sprinkled," or, "have been immersed," then we simply know the statement of the last sentence could never have been in the Book of Truth.

It is absolutely certain that some can be found in all of the churches, who have been sprinkled or immersed "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," who never did "put on Christ." Yet, all who give themselves to God, heartily renouncing "the world, the flesh and the devil," resolving faithfully to do every duty, do really and truly put on Christ. Such, and only such, "have been baptized into Christ."

EPHESIANS.

Eph. 4.—5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

The general scope of thought in this connection bears upon the unifying principles of our holy religion. It is not like those which have "Lords many and God's many." It proclaims "one God and Father of all." Hence all the race are brothers. There is also "one faith" uniting us all to Christ; and, hence, to each other.

There is "one baptism." One real, grand covenant, binding us each and all to the pathway of duty. If we are plunged forward or backward, once or thrice, or sprinkled with a few drops, or poured with many as we take that covenant, still it is the same, all-binding obligation, holding the faithful where God can bless them, hour by hour, with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Although, in ordinary conception, baptism with water, and baptism with the Holy Ghost, seem like *two*, yet, really they are but two parts of the same covenanting process, the alpha and omega, the beginning and ending of one bargain.

In the first, duty and blessings are promised; in the last the duty is done, and the blessings are given.

This text has been brought forward to condemn the usages of those who practice different modes. Those who use it thus, thereby prove that in their thoughts, the materiality of the ordinance is more prominent than the spirituality.

COLOSSIANS.

Col. 2.—11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

This clause resembles the one in Romans, sixth chapter. Its exposition is in the same way. There is here additional evidence that we were correct in our view of the spirituality of that which is expressed by the word "buried." We there argued that it referred to the final putting away—whether by burning, entombing or covering up that which was dead; and that it was the carnal nature that had been destroyed, which was buried.

"Circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." This surely is a spiritual process. It is the Spirit of God accomplishing that which circumcision prefigured, viz: "The putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."

This harmonizes with Romans 6: 2—"dead to sin"—and with the idea of burying or putting away that which is dead. "The body of the sins"

are thus "put off," or away, by the "circumcision of Christ." Christ is our circumcision, separating our sins from us as "far as the east from the west."

The same thought is now repeated in another form.

"Buried with him in baptism." In the last verse spiritual circumcision puts away sin. Here, baptism does the same work. In or by it our total, former, sinful self—"the body of the sins of the flesh"—is "put off" and *"buried."*

The keeping of the baptismal covenant, both on our part and especially on the divine part, has accomplished this blessed result. Thus we ascribe the principle work expressed by the word "buried" and that expressed by "risen" to the same divine power—"the operation of God." This corresponds with the language of the verse.

HEBREWS.

Heb. 6.—1 Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

We insert this quotation that all the New Testament referring to this subject may be before us. It proves that there *is* a “doctrine” connected with “baptisms.” What that is other verses of the Bible must decide. Already this book is nearly filled with them.

Heb. 9.—10 *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

“Divers washings.” Baptisms is the original. This may refer to the ceremonial or traditional customs of the Jews, to the modes of cleansing which originated by divine authority, as did the washing of the priests at the door of the temple (Ex. 29), or by Jewish custom, as probably did the hand-washings or baptisms before meals,

which Christ seemed to esteem lightly (Mark 7.)

Among one class of these baptisms, or "carnal ordinances" may be embraced "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling* the unclean," mentioned in the thirteenth verse of this chapter. Be these ceremonies what they may, they stand vastly inferior to "the blood of Christ," to "purge" or purify "the conscience from dead works." (See 14th verse.)

Heb. 10.—22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

"It is unexegetical with Alford and others, to find here a distinct allusion to baptism. The thought is not of a material body literally washed with water, any more than of a material heart literally sprinkled. * * * The heart is here spiritually sprinkled, as the image of interior purity; the body spiritually washed, is the image of eternal rectitude of life."

I insert approvingly the above comment by Dr. Whedon.

I. PETER.

I. Pet. 3.—18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

The covenantal idea gets new proof from this passage, and sheds new light upon it.

“Christ, * * * by the Spirit, * * * went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” The flood prospective placed the race who lived with Noah “in prison.” They were all hedged in, soon to be executed, unless rescued. Then the blessed Savior, by the Spirit, went and preached. That we locate the time and place correctly, notice, that it was “*when* the long-suffering of God waited,” and “*while the ark was a preparing*, wherein few, that is eight, souls were saved by water.”

"By water." This expression conveys to my mind the idea of time of water, or period of water, as by day or by night refers to the time or period of day or night. It was the ark with God's blessing that saved the eight. All the rest of the race were sprinkled, and poured, and immersed, and killed. And then "few, that is, eight souls, were saved."

A little reflection on the several steps in their salvation will reveal to us the very way that "Baptism doth also now save us."

First. Christ by the spirit preached, strove with them.

Second. One family, or Noah as the representative of the family, *covenanted* with the Lord. (See Gen. 6: 14.) "Make thee an ark," etc., describing it. Then (verse 18), "With thee will I establish my covenant." The family and animals are to be brought in "to keep them alive." Noah pledges to build; God pledges to save them alive.

Third. *Noah kept his pledge*, spite of the ridicule, and temptation, and toil it cost him. Read Gen. 6: 26: "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Twice repeated is the all-important fact that Noah "*did*" keep his pledge.

Fourth, and finally. In keeping that pledge, and building that ark, and receiving God's blessing—a blessing sure to rest on all covenant-

keepers—he, and all with him, float in safety above a drowning, dying world. This agrees with the language in Hebrew 11: 7—“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” Can divine history show us in plainer words that the condition of salvation to the favored “eight” was the making, and especially the keeping, of their covenant with God?

We have already had occasion to notice that baptism, as a *present* reality, is the keeping of our vows and receiving the blessings of God. Mark the tense, “doth now save.” The baptism that doth save is Holy Ghost blessings on faithful men.

“Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” This refers to the ceremony. The expression is appropriate, whether it be by the more usual mode of sprinkling, or the more literal mode of plunging or washing. The text assures us that it is not this which saves; and, thinking of the entire history and the very spirit of the Bible, I feel certain that it is not the covenant-making, so much as the covenant-keeping that saved the eight and will save us. Where would Noah have been, had he failed to finish the ark? Where will we be if we fail to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, and fail to keep God’s holy commandments?

That we, like the eight, are saved by keeping our covenant, still further appears by the peculiar expression of the next sentence :

“The answer of a good conscience toward God.”

This line beautifully and forcibly conveys to our minds the two ideas referred to :—the doing our duty, and receiving God’s blessing.

“A good conscience towards God,” hears a call, majestic as the voice of Jehovah, to do all earthly duties, especially our covenanted ones. *Duty-doing* is the response, “the answer.” A good conscience, looking up toward God, calls out with all the deep, deathless yearnings of our immortality for the approval of the eternal. *Duty-doing*, and nothing else in the universe will bring back from the throne the true “answer.” This, conditionally, saved the eight. Thus we may be saved.

I. JOHN.

I. John 5.—6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.

7 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his son.

Before the writer's mind there seems to have arisen the question, "Are we the children of God?" If so, we have a victory that overcometh the world." The fifth verse sounds like a challenge to show a single individual "that overcometh the world, but he that is born of God."

The question of our approval before God suggests another. Was that Jesus in whom we trust "the Christ," the true Messiah? The witness of *His* acceptance, and of *ours*, are the two prominent thoughts before us. Other ideas are more or less subordinate to these.

"This is He that came by water and blood [baptism and death], even Jesus Christ, * * * and it is the Spirit that beareth witness." It bore witness at His baptism. The "voice;" the "dove." There were abundant attestations at His death. Even the fact of His death, viewed in its relation to His baptism, was a witness to His all-righteous integrity. It fulfilled His baptismal pledge. Though bitter was the cup He drank it. He became "obedient to death, even the death of the cross," thereby receiving the highest possible approval, even "a name that is above every name."

The genuineness of the seventh verse is called in question. It is not found in the majority of ancient manuscripts. It is not important to our Notes whether we accept or reject it. Nor is it to our theology. The doctrine of a Trinity will stand, whether John wrote that verse or not—"And there are three that bear witness in earth."

"*The Spirit.*" Comforting us, assuring us of God's favor. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit."

"*The water.*" Baptismal water should be a witness. It is, if the minister is true to duty, and makes no mistakes as to the proper subjects, baptizing only the good, or those seeking goodness.

"*The blood*" is also a witness. It is the ultimate witness, used by or pointed to with the

other witnesses. The Spirit uses all its merits. The water points to its merits.

"In earth" these all bear witness. Here, the Comforter has come to abide, even to the end of time. Here, too, the baptismal water is used. Here, take the vows of eternal union to God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

"The blood," too, is for the dwellers on earth. Here, it was shed. Here—not in eternity—it must wash away sins.

The two lines of thought concerning the *witnesses* to Christ the Redeemer, and to Christians, the redeemed, suggest other resemblances.

With Christ, his baptism looked towards his death. Our baptism looks to the merits of the same death. With Christ, his death, his blood, was the glory, the climax of his baptism. It accomplished it. With us, that blood applied is the glory, the climax of our baptism.

At Christ's baptism, the voice and the Spirit would never have borne witness, had they not seen the blood prospectively flowing. Without that shed blood the Holy Spirit would never witness to a sinner saved. Christ, by keeping his baptismal vow, perfected his earthly work, and was welcomed to "the joy set before him." We, by keeping our vows, shall finish our work and go "sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."

"If we receive the witness of men." Here, the *water* of baptism is alluded to. If it is applied to us, it is applied by men, authorized, it is presumed, or we would spurn them; yet, men they are, and the water applied by them may be only the witness of men. It surely would be, if used on those who are not, either, already of the kingdom, like Christ, and little children, and the Gentile converts, or seeking a place in the kingdom as were those mentioned in Acts 2: 37, who cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In short, water applied without the divine sanction is only the witness of men. To trust in its application, or in anything that men can do for our salvation, is utter folly and delusion. Therefore, let all who have received the witness of men, remember that *"The witness of God is greater."* "The witness of God" is the Holy Spirit applying to us the merits of the blood, and assuring us of our acceptance with God.

"Greater." Men may err. The Spirit is truth. Men cannot always detect hypocrisy. "The Spirit searcheth all things." Men may baptize an unbeliever whose words profess faith, while his heart is enmity towards God. But the witness of the Spirit will never bless such a person. "Greater," for it is the completion of our baptism by water. It is as much greater as was the sacrificial death of Christ, fulfilling all righteousness greater than the vow by which he promised to fulfill.

REVELATION.

Rev. 19—13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

“*Dipped*” is the same in the original as the word “baptized.” The word is not used ceremonially. It is the “vesture,” or garment, and not a person, that is said to be baptized. Were we disposed to add a controversial word, we should insist that His vesture, whether stained or drenched, was *baptized*—not by immersing or plunging it into the blood, but by the blood falling upon it, shed from hands, and side, and brow.

This is the only time the word is used in Revelation. So, we here terminate our Textual Notes. We are glad to be brought here in sight of the Cross. Nor are we less glad because we behold, not a baptismal ceremony, but the blood which stained the vesture, and the Cross of Calvary, and can make stainless all the world beside.

Dear reader, looking to that blood, bending before that Cross, and worshipping that Dying Victim, let us reaffirm with infinite emphasis our life-long covenant.

“Here at the cross where flows the blood
That bought my guilty soul for God,
Thee my new Master now I call,
And consecrate to Thee my all.”

“Thine would I live, Thine would I die;
Be Thine through all eternity;
The vow is past beyond repeal,
And now I set the solemn seal.”

BAPTISM OF JESUS.

We have already given our views upon this subject, classifying it with all other true baptisms in its covenantal character.*

It differs as differs the one making the covenant and the peculiar work to be done by Him. It is His pledge to fulfill all righteousness, His solemn consecration to the Messiahship, His covenant to redeem our race. There is in it not only a resemblance to our baptism with water, but also some resemblance to Holy Ghost baptism. Here the Holy Ghost, which invisibly visits the truly consecrated, now visibly appears, and God, the Father, who always approves, though usually in spirit-like silence, now audibly cries out, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."†

It seems to me that the baptism of Jesus should so modify our views as to make us regard baptism as the sign of any favor received by the proper subject of the ordinance.

*See notes in Mat. 3: 13-14; 20: 20-23. Luke 12: 50.

†"This gift [Holy Spirit] only honoured John's baptism once, in the extraordinary case of the baptism of our Lord."—Watson's Inst., page 627, Vol. 2.

This is scarcely a departure, for our "articles of religion" call it "a sign of regeneration, or the new birth."

Watson carries out the import of the ordinance, claiming that it is also a sign "of the placability of God to man," "of peculiar relation to God," of "*the Holy Spirit* in his FULLNESS upon all believers," and "of the effusion 'of the power from on high.' " *

Let the water of baptism be regarded as the sign of divine favor or of blessings, and the baptism of Jesus, and the purified Gentile, and the infant, and the penitent, are each and all harmonious and consistent.

Recently a friend told me that he heard a high churchman state that Christ must have sinned, as baptism was always a sign of regeneration !

Our good Dr. Hibbard, starting from the same premises, reaches a far more reverential conclusion. He declares that "Christ's baptism did not partake of the nature of Christian baptism ;" for * * * "as a sign it [baptism] witnesseth to our inward washing and regeneration by the Holy Ghost, which, from the nature of the case, presupposes defilement by sin. Remove the idea of antecedent pollution by sin, and you annihilate the grand intent of baptism as a sign." †

*Inst., Vol. 2, page 626.

†Hibbard on Bap., part 2, pages 33 and 34.

Having ruled out the baptism of Jesus from among ordinary baptisms, and assuming that in it Christ fulfilled "all righteousness," never once thinking that in it He merely "covenanted to fulfill all righteousness," the Doctor's next step is "to ascertain what law then in vogue required the Savior to be baptized." This was a very difficult task. Let us hear the conclusion: "If we examine the whole code of Moses, we shall find no law that required Jesus to be baptized at this particular juncture, but the law enjoining and regulating priestly consecration, recorded in Exodus 29th, and Leviticus, 8th chapter."

We insert the reference to Leviticus, 8th chapter, 5th to 7th verses :

"And Moses said unto the congregation, 'This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.' And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put on him the coat, and girded him," etc., etc.

If there is no law but this, then I fail to see any law or propriety in the baptism of Jesus. The command of God to Noah to build an ark is about as direct a command to John to baptize Jesus, as is this command to Moses to wash "Aaron and his sons."

The *impropriety*, the *inconsistency* of this ceremonial washing of One who was always pure, is the strongest objection to this long accepted view of our church.

That washing indicated previous defilement, now to be put away. This priestly purification is no more appropriate to Jesus Christ than would be an ordinary baptism, even if baptism were always a sign of regeneration. This reasoning cannot be evaded by saying that He had a human as well as divine nature, for His human nature was stainless. It was the second Adam, but unlike the first Adam, it maintained its perfect, unfallen integrity.

We urge a much milder but real objection to this view of Christ's baptism. He was not an earthly priest, only at the closing drama of His life. His priestly work began when He made an offering of Himself for us—when His body was broken, and the veil of the Jewish temple was rent in twain. Ever since, He has been the world's only priest, but not on earth. Soon the everlasting doors of the upper temple opened to receive Him, and *there* "He abideth, a priest forever."

The transaction recorded in Mat. 21: 12, where "Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers," is the one cited to prove his earthly priesthood. This was truly a sublime illustration of His divine authority and power, daring to enter the temple of Jehovah, and dictate who

shall be there and what they shall do; but this was not an ordinary priestly act.

It was much more like the Judge of all men ordering the ungodly to their merited doom, than like an appointed agent offering sacrifices for their reconciliation to God. Our view gives equally as good, perhaps a better, reason why (to use the language of Dr. Hibbard) "He evidently appealed to John's baptism for a vindication of the authority He had exercised."

Let me italicize the above word "*authority*," and this sentence is perfectly expressive of our view. His authority as the "Son of God"—as the "One mightier" than John, and not only mightier than John, but mightier than any and all of the regularly installed priestly managers of that Jewish temple—all this He needed to establish, in order to vindicate His doings on that occasion. All this His appeal did establish in the mind and heart of all who admit that "the baptism of John" was "from Heaven," and not "of men."

The age of Jesus at His baptism—"about thirty years"—does not harmonize well with the view that He was baptized as our *example*. *This* fact, of itself, is not against the idea of its being a priestly purification and consecration. Nor is it out of harmony with the claim that His baptism was His pledge to do all the work of the suffering Savior. If the only issue was

between our theory and the theory that it was for an example, we could appropriately urge the fact as an argument on our side.

At eight days old, by parental covenant, He had been consecrated to the only Heaven-approved religion that was on earth, prior to His public work; and now, just as He enters upon the work which is to introduce and establish the new dispensation, how appropriate, how becoming the covenant of its grand fulfillment!

This theory explains, as we have already seen, why His baptism was a present fact through all His life—a fact interwoven with all His sufferings—or, rather, binding all those sufferings to His great heart, leading Him to cry, “How am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

Whether our views shall be received or not, it is evident that our best thinkers have not been thoroughly satisfied with the more usual theories advanced.

Dr. Hibberd himself says: “We are under no obligation, from the posture of the controversy, to prove what was the real character of His baptism. We do not profess to know positively.”
* * * Later, he uses words that I would like to make my own: “Should our views of the subject prove unsatisfactory to any, let us not therefor be faulted.”*

*Part II., page 32. Hibbard on Bap.

But the careful student will observe that these views are vital to the entire subject as here treated. From His baptism we get our idea of its spirituality. His words furnished us our reliable dictionary to define that spirituality. His baptism gives tone to our view of its import as a *sign*. Other important points are to follow; and is it not favorable to our views, that, by them, we are enabled to place His baptism, and His words thereon, in this central, lofty position?

Some valuable lessons are drawn from the admission that the baptism of Jesus is, in its central features, like our own—lessons harmonizing with the views of some of the churches, and instructive to the views of others.

And, *first*, baptism may be administered to such as are already, or even long ago, good enough for Heaven. Jesus was always fit for Heaven. He was of the Kingdom by virtue of His own pure nature. He was not baptized to bring Him into the Kingdom. Infants and children, *not* by nature, yet by grace, are of the Kingdom. They are not baptized to get them into the Kingdom or into Heaven. They are of the Kingdom with or without baptism. They will go to Heaven, with or without baptism.*

Again, and in harmony with this, baptism is *not* always and *uniformly* “for the remission of sins.”

*See more of this note in the next Note.

If I understand the theory of a young, yet large and growing organization, who insist on being called "*The Christian Church*," they claim that baptism is always, by divine appointment, linked with conversion; that it is one of the essential tests of our submission to the terms of salvation, instituted and practiced for *the one only* purpose of obtaining remission of sins and a transfer from the condition of an alien to that of a citizen. With my eye upon the baptism of Jesus, I protest most earnestly and persistently against this theory. I know they will tell me that His baptism was an example for us to follow. But He was *never* an example concerning that which the sinful, and only the sinful, need to do. His example was always *in* the path of goodness. He never traveled one step of that road leading from sinfulness to sinlessness. All along that entire track His *words*, and not His deeds, are the sinner's only guide. He never repented. He never confessed a sin. He never made restitution. He never prayed for pardon. Such an act would have been worse than *human* hypocrisy. It would have been absolutely suicidal to His claim of divinity. Equally revolting would it have been for him to have submitted to an ordinance which has no other design than "the remission of sins."

That the baptism of Jesus, which that church has always admitted, and for which they have

contended, had not long ago corrected their theory of baptism is, to my mind, proof *positive* that they have been far more studious about its *outer* seeming than its *deeper meaning*.

Again, thinking of the baptism of Jesus, I do not like the idea that baptism is always the door into the church. Was Jesus once out of the church? Did John initiate Him into it? Was the regular church membership of the eternal "Son of God" contingent upon the act of a finite being?

If the old question is again raised: why an inferior should baptize a superior, our theory gives a key to its solution.

A chief justice, of humble ability, might administer the oath to a president elect, if one could be chosen, possessed of all the mental and moral worth of every patriot that ever lived!

If His baptism was becoming, it must have been of such a nature that an inferior could officiate, for His "*name is above every name.*"

INFANT BAPTISM.

It is not so much to argue this subject, as to show its relation to the views here presented, that this note is appended.

It is only in the light of a covenant that infant baptism can be consistently practiced and defended. And the parent or sponsor must bear for years the entire burden of one side of the covenant. The right of the parent to covenant for the child, has been fully established by laws, ancient and modern, sacred and secular. The law of circumcision is a well-known illustration. So of the right to bind a child to work for another, or to learn a trade. In these cases parents are allowed to covenant for their children. Though the child may not ratify the pledge and fulfill its terms, when he shall grow up, yet this affects not the parent's right to bind him. In a high *spiritual* sense, the child's *personal* baptism is not fully completed until, in maturer years, he stands devoutly at the door of the church, and takes upon *himself* "the solemn promise contained in the baptismal covenant,

ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging himself bound faithfully to observe and keep that covenant.”*

It certainly need not lessen the force or mar the beauty of this covenant, for the child to remember that a loving parent dared to bear it upon his own soul, in behalf of the child, long before the child bowed beneath its holy obligations.

And we ask no better proof that God has remembered his part of the covenant, than we have in the fact that now the child seeks a home in the church, gladly honoring his parents, by making their former vow in his behalf henceforth literally his own.

Quite as interesting to the masses is the question of THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR BAPTISM.

I have no desire to modify or recall an opinion already expressed, that everything essential to salvation has been made very plain in our Bible. I believe that no student of average ability ever did or ever will fail to find in that book all that is necessary for his own safety, and the safety of those under his especial control. Most earnestly do I reject a theory from which would follow the awful conclusion, that thousands of Baptist Bible students are still in a darkness that puts their children into eternal danger. I do believe that

*Discipline M. E. Ch., ¶ 594.—For some analogy between baptized children and *thoughtlessly* baptized adults, see Final Note.

our Bible would have made infant baptism indisputably plain, if it had been infinitely important. But, mark well this fact: While all important duties are plainly enjoined, all sins are as plainly forbidden. If the Author of our Bible had regarded infant baptism with one fractional part of the disapproval with which some of my friends regard it, I cannot account for this absence of prohibitory precept. This seems all the more strange when we remember that a covenantal ceremony had, by divine appointment, been practiced upon the children of the church for ages; and, that the Author of the Bible knew that in less than two centuries the practice would be universal in the church, and, unless forbidden, would continue to be practiced by the majority of the churches to the end of time.

Now, there must be some propriety in infant baptism, or else it is a sin against God. Will we call it a sin? Then we are brought into these dilemmas: A sin may resemble, in its essential character, an ancient, Heaven-ordained ceremony! That sin may be committed by thousands of the good, who are tempted to it by love to God and love to their offspring? And that sin, fearful as the mockery of a sacrament, was totally unforbidden by that God who fore-saw that the most of the Church would be guilty of it through all the coming ages! To me, the

comparative silence of the Bible is eloquent in proof that there can be no especial wrong in the practice any more than there can be saving efficacy connected therewith. This is reasonable. What harm can result to a child from an action so trivial in its externals, performed by others upon it? We are told it will debar them from choosing their own mode of baptism when they grow up. By no means. The churches holding the supposed views of said grown up child will be very glad to accommodate him to a baptism and church-home perfectly congenial to such views. Equally true to good reason that no great moral change of nature can be conditioned upon work performed entirely by another, and that other a finite being. To believe in the baptismal regeneration of infants, is to believe that the immortal destiny of one human soul is entirely contingent upon a few moments' work of another human soul. That a priest, with a pitcher of water, can transfer from eternal danger to eternal safety forty souls per hour, is an assumption too repugnant to reason to need refuting.

Rejecting the views of *extremists*, who, on one side, regard it *sinful*, and on the other *saving*, we classify it, in its importance, with the baptism of Jesus, to which, in other respects, there is resemblance. That word "*becometh*" expresses all we claim for it. It is proper. It is appropriate. It becometh us to consecrate them—to pledge

their lives to God. In the language of our discipline, it "is to be retained in the Church."

The relations of children to the Kingdom of Heaven are so much like the relation sustained by Christ, that if his baptism was becoming, theirs is also. Both are of the Kingdom. The one is so by nature, the other by grace. The infant of a few days or years, and the Jesus of childhood or manhood could have gone unbaptized with water directly to Heaven finding there a welcome. Children, like Jesus, need no forgiveness. They never violated a law. If they remain unbaptized, they are not blamable therefor; and as to their inheritance of depravity, they are not to blame for it, and the lack of priestly ceremony shall not deprive them of their inheritance of grace. It is no more certain that a child is an heir of human depravity than that he is also an heir of the grace of God. If a sad fate united him to the *first* Adam, a most blessed provision has united him to the second Adam. If in the first he inherits a curse, in the second he inherits blessings.

In the baptism of Jesus we have proof that baptism is not always for regeneration. He was pure without it. It is not always for forgiveness. He never needed pardon. It does not always rescue a soul from eternal peril. He was never in danger. The long delay of His baptism did not put Him in peril. This delay, which is

the principal point of dissimilarity, may seem to some greatly out of harmony with the analogies we are claiming. But let us remember that His baptism was not delayed a day after he began with authority to teach men. He began his public instructions by urging His servant John to baptize the very person who, of all the universe, was most certainly of the Kingdom; and we expect the majority of His servants, until the end of time, will continue to baptize that class of our race, who are, most assuredly, of the Kingdom.

Keeping in mind the analogies, many a dart aimed at infant baptism will strike the baptism of Jesus, and fall powerless at our feet.

“Are you afraid your child will be lost if it is not baptized?” Was Christ in danger?

“Does a preacher with water save the child?” Did John save Jesus?

Although we reject the high-church theory, yet we claim for infant baptism some real advantages—advantages resembling adult baptism. In both are given the *emblem* and *assurance* of blessings. These are as appropriate in behalf of a child as of a repenting or converted man. The inspiration of a solemn vow or oath is valuable in both cases. The oath of the adult is an inspiration to him to do right—to be all the Lord’s; and the oath of the parent or sponsor, that their baptized child shall be the Lord’s, is also a con-

stant inspiration, not to the child, it is true, but to the very one whose conduct, for some years, has mainly to do in shaping the character and destiny of the child. The formation of character, for several years, is far more the result of parental conduct toward the child than of the careless doings of the child; and hence the covenant of consecration, and the inspiration from it, rest wisely upon that parent through all those years. Nor shall the parent be released from that vow, even though the child has endorsed it, so long as that parent's efforts can bless that child.

We are told that the child is unconscious. Yes, but he is not *uninfluenced*. Let us take an imaginary illustration for an example. Suppose the walls of a new church to be a peculiar spiritual daguerrian plate, so constructed that they would be impressed by every word spoken or deed performed in their presence, and even by the thoughts of the congregation. Let them be so impressible that pure worship would beautify those walls, making them glorious as those of the Temple of God on high. Let every good word leave an impression richer than gold, and every good deed done adorn it with the perfection of beauty, and high and holy thoughts radiate all the scene with Heaven's pure glory, while bad thoughts, and deeds, and words, would have blemished it with utter deformity and repul-

siveness. Then, if that church, unconscious now as a sleeping babe, was soon to become a sensitive, responsible person, to be honored for its beauty or loathed for its repulsiveness, is it not possible that the right sort of a dedication service would do it some good? Let the first audience assemble, not merely to collect money, but with impressive ceremony to take upon their every heart and conscience a vow—a vow as sacred as if their eternal destiny depended on their keeping it—a vow ever in that church to think, and speak, and act, as in the immediate presence of the great I AM! Is it not likely that such a dedication of such a church would do it some good? Is it not probable that the God to whom the church was dedicated would endorse the propriety, yea, the righteousness of such a dedication?

I need not point out the analogy between the dedication of such an imagined church and the baptism of an infant immortal.

Many other arguments for the baptism of infants would be presented, were it not that the writer's constant aim has been to make these Notes, as far as possible, supplemental to the thoughts of others, instead of a reiteration of them.

Having referred to the antiquity of the practice, I ought to give some proof on that point.

Justin Martyr, born about the year the Apostle John died, says: "There are many among us of both sexes, some sixty, some seventy years old, who were made disciples of Christ in their childhood."

Again, Irenarus wrote about fifty years after the apostolic age. He says: "Christ came to save all persons who are baptized to God—*infants, and little ones, and children.*"

"Tertullian lived about 100 years after the apostolic age. He declares it the common practice in his day.

"Origen declares that the church received an order from the apostles to baptize infants. He lived 185 years after the apostles.

"In the year 153, after the apostolic age, a council of 66 bishops were assembled at Carthage, on a question then in debate, whether a child two days old might have baptism, or whether, as in case of circumcision, it should be delayed until the eighth day. They unanimously agreed to have them baptized as soon as convenient. Here is testimony beyond the possibility of a doubt, in the bosom of every rational man, that infant baptism was then universally practiced in the churches.

"A host of other eminent men might be quoted, giving the most positive testimony to the truth that infant baptism was practiced in apostolic times; but we come down to the day

of Augustine, the greatest luminary of his age. He lived about 280 years after the apostles. He says, in the most express terms, that the whole church practiced infant baptism. Again, he speaks of baptizing infants by the authority of the whole church, which was undoubtedly delivered by our Lord and his apostles. Again, Pelagius lived at the same time as Augustine (he was a heretic), and engaged in debate with Augustine. In the debate Augustine accused him of denying to children the right of baptism, but he hurled it back as a foul slander. Hear him: 'Men *slander me* as if I denied infant baptism. Why,' says he, 'I never heard of any—no, not the most impious heretic—who denied this right to the children.'*

Similar quotations could be largely extended, and the question presses itself, Whence comes this practice unless from Christ and the apostles? It is claimed that the argument drawn from the custom of the early church is neutralized by the fact that they held with it the notion that in baptism the child was regenerated.

An error as to the design of the ordinance could readily obtain, but an error as to whether it were practiced would be very difficult. The men who associated with the early disciples could not be mistaken as to their usage, but might be as to their motives.

*Quoted from a Tract by Rev. A. B. Morrison.

Scores in a certain community asserted that the writer had his child baptized to get it ready for Heaven. It was very easy to be mistaken as to the design of that ceremony, but absolutely impossible as to the fact. Nor, in a careful investigation, would an error in their notion of my design detract an iota from the reliability of their statement of my practice. So of the early church. We fully believe they knew the practice of the apostles and fathers, and followed it, but very soon erred greatly as to the reasons for this practice.

FINAL NOTE.

Patient reader, a little random gleaning and our self-imposed task is done.

We hope you have noticed much in this volume harmonious with the ideas of divergent systems of thought.

The high-churchman claims that the ordinances are always mediums of divine favor. They always should be closely allied to favors.

The "Evangelicals" regard them as a sign of favors. The visible substance is a sign, and, used aright, it is the sign of favors actually bestowed on the one receiving it.

The Baptists have always, by this ordinance, received persons into their church. This usage is very pertinent to our claim of the covenantal character of the ceremony. Nearly every society in the world initiate their candidates by obligating them to the duties of the society.

With the views here unfolded, we can heartily endorse the genuine religious experience of the best men we have met in "*The Christian Church*," the church which reject a *specific* name, *intensely* determined to monopolize the *one generic* name

of all who love Jesus. We have met some who related to us about this experience. "Years ago, I decided to be a follower of Christ. I knew I had sinned, and I expected forgiveness in the name of Jesus, and in the first act of duty. Believing it my duty to be immersed, I yielded to the conviction. With trembling, I gave my hand to the minister, to be led into the water, and as he used the name of Jesus I dedicated myself fully to the service of Christ. Then I felt myself wedded to the world's Redeemer. Ever since then I have delighted to do all the duties he has required. Now, am I correct in thinking that I was converted at the time of my baptism?" Yes, most assuredly, is my response. Saved, because they covenanted themselves to the Lord. And in kindly good-will I pray that such experiences may yet be as numerous as their membership. For I must insist (and ministers of that church have admitted the same, in conversation with me,) that the one who seeks water baptism merely to get into the church, desiring membership therein for secular ends, with no design or effort to be a follower of Christ; such a person would never be any the better for his baptism, although performed by the most perfect mode and by the best minister on earth.

They who covenanted are converted, but the rest, although immersed, are still unconverted.

The almost unanimous protest of the religious world against re-baptism agrees well with these notes. As baptism is not only our promise to God, but God's promise to us, it seems irreverent to ask for it to be repeated. Once speaking by the Immutable is enough. But if on our part there has been unfaithfulness, then let there be on our part a renewal of our vows.

The question may be raised as to the repetition of the ceremony upon those unworthily baptized. Some, of mature years, may receive the ceremony, who, in their ignorance or carelessness, do not dedicate themselves to God. Such are baptized ceremonially but not spiritually. In order to complete their baptism, they must take upon their heart the true covenant of the ordinance.

In the last Note, we admitted that the baptized child had a personal spiritual work to do when he reached maturity, in order fully to claim the blessings of the covenant. If the grown-up child fails to do this work, then his relations to God, and to baptism, are about the same as those sustained by the carelessly baptized adult. Both have received the ceremony, and need not take it again. Both are guilty if they neglect to take upon their conscience the true baptismal vow. But, through all the tender years of that child, his baptism was far superior to the carelessly baptized adult,

because his rightful substitute was then truly pledged in his behalf; while, in behalf of said adult, there was no pledge from man to God.

If one acted the part of the hypocrite in receiving the ceremony, the case is far worse; worse in that his sin was so great; but we would give the same advice: repent, and be in heart fully covenanted.

We can illustrate our view of the condition and duty of those unworthily baptized, by referring to a marriage ceremony that might occur. Suppose the circumstances of the marriage were all right and proper, except the terrible fact that the man did not design to love, honor, care for, or in any way to keep his marriage vow. By and by he is alarmed at the awful guilt of his heart and life. Shall he be re-married to that companion? Of course not. Although, strictly speaking, he has never, in the eye of God, been spiritually and truly her husband, but merely a wicked reveler; yet, the marriage ceremony need not be repeated. But he must repent that his marriage was a vile mockery of God's holy ordinance; and then in heart most solemnly vow to love, and live as he should in this sacred relation. Then, keeping his vow, he will meet the approval of his God.

So we reason and advise concerning all who, in the ceremony of baptism, did not consecrate themselves to its holy duties. In the true spir-

itual sense of the word, they are not baptized. They cannot claim a single blessing pronounced only upon the baptized. And they are more or less guilty, according to the brightness or dimness of the light that should have guided them to a true baptism. But the minister need not repeat the ceremony. Let all such repent of their past sins, and bind themselves heartily to all their future duties, and keep their bond till death. Thus God will approve.

The material emblem for baptism has been kindly and wisely chosen. It is found wherever men can dwell. It is the gift of God, free as the air we breathe, pure as robes of light, beautiful as Heaven. It indicates satisfaction. It is an emblem of salvation here and hereafter. Its use in the baptismal service should make our earthly home appear more like Heaven; and whenever and wherever we see it, in the rain or in the river, in the dew-drop or in the ocean, God would have us each to feel I AM CONSECRATED—"I am the Lord's and He is mine."

Firmly believing that the mode is not decided by divine authority, I would like to baptize in the way most likely to leave a deep and holy impression upon the mind and heart of the subject. Sometimes immersion might do this. If I was sure that thus they would most heartily consecrate themselves, and that henceforth they would not rest one particle of hope on the fact

of this immersion, but rest it all the more on Jesus, then, thus I would be glad to baptize.

But we cannot get rid of the conviction that, in all that pertains to our religion, God designs great simplicity in that which is material and visible, reserving for the spiritual part all that is great and imposing.

Of the Lord's supper: How simple the emblems. A crumb of bread. A taste of wine. How sublime the spiritual facts they betoken. A dying Jesus. A rising Jesus. A world's Redeemer. To "show forth his death," why was there not instituted a yearly celebration of grand and lofty seeming? Why did not the Savior allow us to form an image of rare beauty, and raise it upon a literal cross, and gather around it lovingly, adoringly? The reason is obvious. Such pretentious ceremonies are at war with the very genius of a religion, which would leave in the back-ground the material and the earthly, and bring forward a spirituality to be the "all and in all."

The all-wise God knows, and every careful observer has learned, *that in proportion to the prominence or grandeur of the material or visible part of a religious ceremony, is the tendency and danger of confiding wholly in that materiality.*

I am almost disposed to put the above italics into bold capitals. I want them re-read by every one who loves a great parade in religious ceremony.

Some may ask if this does not argue against ordinances altogether; and if the reasoning be valid, why were they instituted? I believe they would not have been instituted were it not for their great value in establishing the authenticity of our religion; and also for the fact that, if these ordinances are administered with their Heaven-designed simplicity, they will lead us to spirituality, and not divert us from it.

I greatly admire this wonderful simplicity in the outer forms of our spiritual religion.

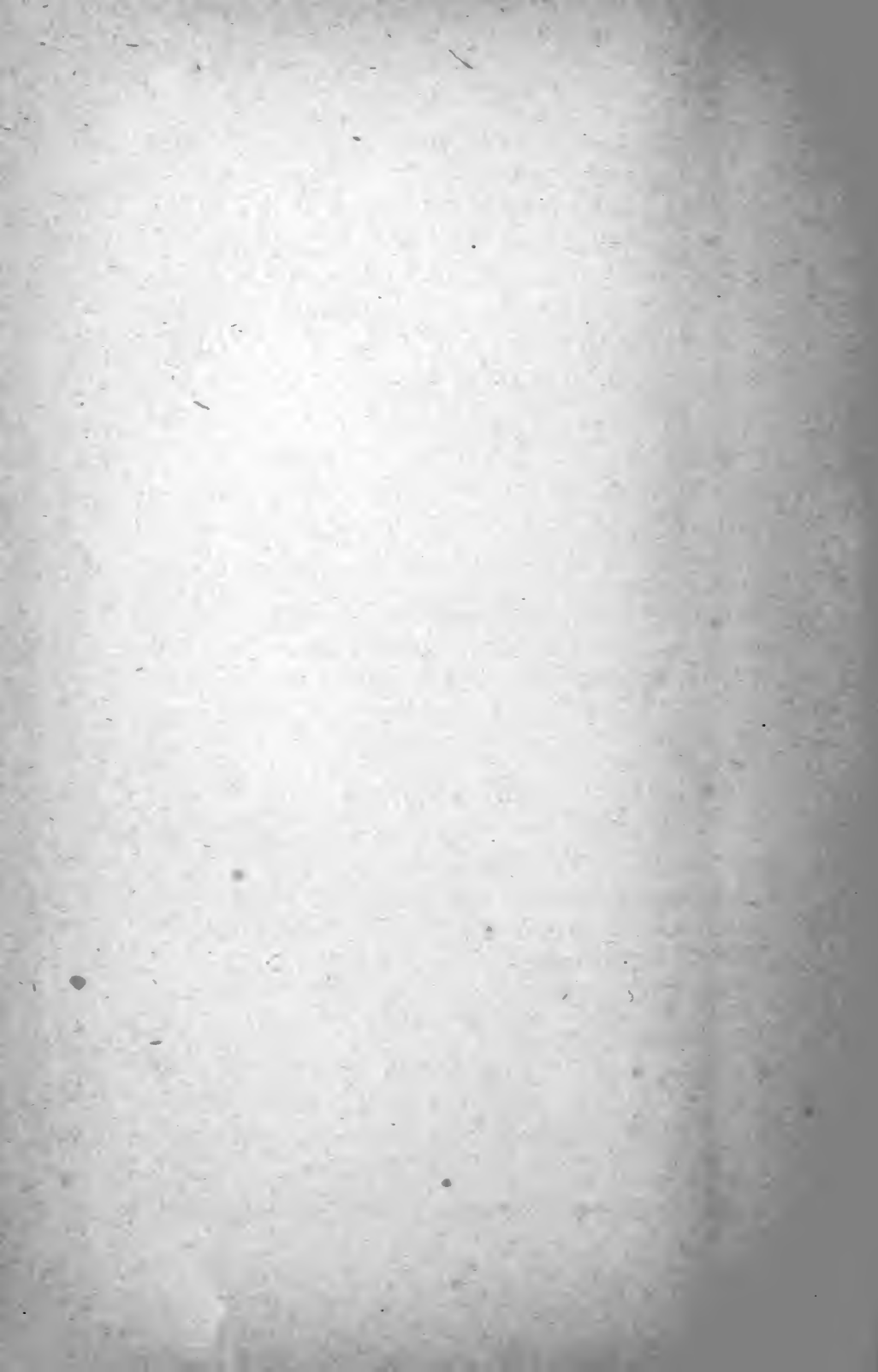
It is not the material emblems of our holy communion that thrill and bless the faithful who kneel at our altars. The bread and wine are nothing compared to the riches of grace and love they call to mind.

A few drops of water! How small they seem! Despise them not. They will never turn the eye away from Jesus. And, small as they are, yet, as they fall upon the brow "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," they may have a typical meaning sublimely grand as the thrones and riches and pleasures of the realms of eternal light. They should mean that here is an immortal soul bound by the strongest oath that man can take, to be now, henceforth and forever the Lord's, bound so firmly that nothing on earth shall loose it—that no duty or trial shall ever dishearten it; no re-

proach or scorn ever shame it ; nor prison dungeons or martyr's flames alarm it.

Then shall they also mean that the richest blessings of the Trinity, for time and eternity, are, by the oath of the immutable God, pledged to that immortal soul.

THE END.



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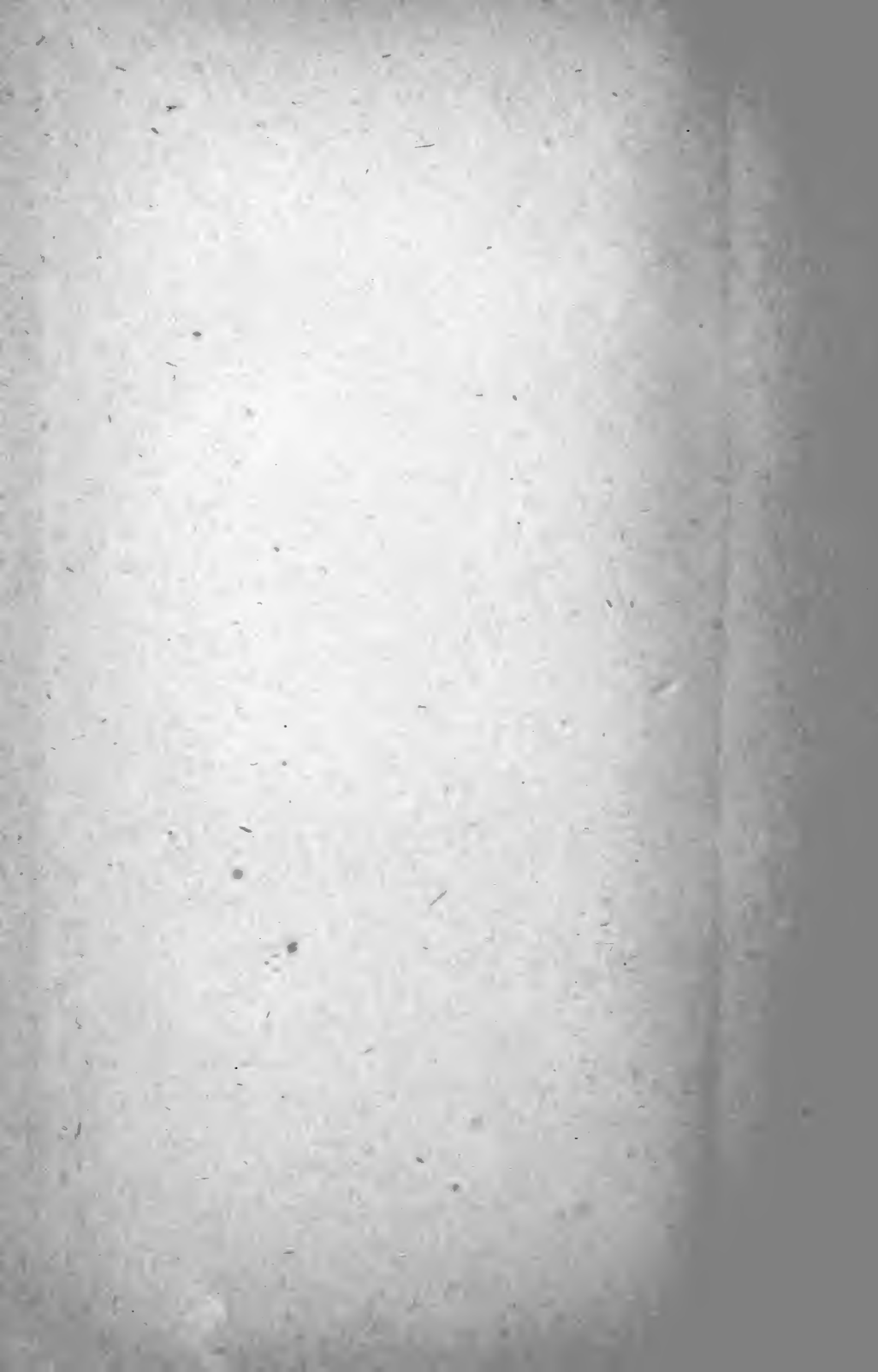
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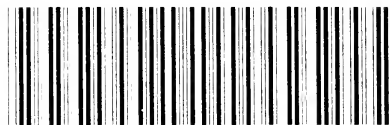
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